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AFFIRMATIONS  
OF JUDAISM

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# AFFIRMATIONS OF JUDAISM

BY  
THE CHIEF RABBI  
(DR. J. H. HERTZ)

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY FATHER



## PREFATORY NOTE

THE following pulpit addresses are an attempt to restate in popular form some of the main data of the Jewish consciousness. In view of the religious unrest of the age, aggravated in the Jewish community by misunderstanding from without and within, there is room for a presentation of Judaism that endeavours to bring out the truth and eternal timeliness of Israel's historic beliefs and institutions.

Three of these sermons, 'The New Paths', have been published previously. The welcome that greeted them, and the assurances of their helpfulness that reached me from all parts of the world, fill me with the hope of a similar reception for the complete series.

Because of the importance of the subject, I include in this volume my address on Religious Education at the Leeds Conference, 1924.

J. H. H.

LONDON, 10 *Adar Sheni*, 5687.





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# AFFIRMATIONS OF JUDAISM

## I

### THE UNITY OF GOD

*Sermon preached on the First Day of Passover 5686,  
30 March 1926, at the Brondesbury  
Synagogue, London.*

THE unique Home Service that from time immemorial inaugurates this festival—the *Haggadah shel Pesach*—is really the oldest and most comprehensive of Passover sermons. And the congregation to whom that sermon is preached is not confined to the four walls of any building, to the limits of any town, or to the boundaries of any one land. It is addressed to all Israel; and all Israel has indeed found it an inexhaustible treasury of Passover thought. We, too, shall this morning go to one of its folk-songs, *אמר מי ידע*, for our text. A somewhat unusual text, 'tis true. In Judaism, however, every institution, prayer or custom, if but understood, shines, like the face of the Lawgiver; and even a children's rhyme may be found, on a moment's consideration, to be a striking epitome of the great facts of the Jewish consciousness. Such an unforgettable summary of the basic principles of Judaism will prove especially helpful in the series of pulpit addresses which I begin to-day on the foundations and affirmations of Judaism.

The first affirmation of Judaism is the Unity of God. אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וְנֶאֱרָץ: 'Who knows one? I know one: One is our God, in heaven as on earth.' The belief in One God who, as the conclusion of this same song reminds us, is an eternal Being, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin—this sublime conviction remains for all time the very corner-stone of Israel's Faith. On it are built all our other beliefs respecting God and man. It is the quintessential embodiment of all our philosophy, as well as the chief of Israel's contributions to the everlasting truths of religion. Polytheism—it has been well said—broke the moral unity of man and gave religious sanction to the foulest practices. Monotheism alone is, for the individual, the basis of undivided moral allegiance to a God of justice and mercy; for the nations, it is the proclamation of Human Brotherhood, since the One God must be the God of the whole of humanity.<sup>1</sup> Israel's recognition of the Unity of God goes back to the cradle of the Hebrew people, to Abraham our Father; and yet it is as new as the ripest thought of our own day. Modern science is monistic. Every new discovery more firmly establishes the fact that there is a unity of all creative forces in the Universe; that in all Nature's infinite variety there is one single principle at work; that the cosmos has been planned and is controlled by One Power, which—in the words of our *Adon Olam* hymn—is of no beginning and no

<sup>1</sup> James Drummond, *Via, Veritas, Vita*, Hibbert Lectures, 1894, pp. 190, 191.

end, which has existed before all things were formed, and will remain when all are gone.<sup>2</sup>

And this One God—Judaism holds—is the righteous Ruler of the world, the Judge of all the earth, who can and will do right, and whose Kingdom of righteousness will be realized in humanity. As early as the days of the second Temple the opening words of the Shema, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One,' have been immediately followed by 'Blessed be His name, His glory and His kingdom for ever and ever,' the Messianic proclamation of the triumph of justice on earth. This cardinal Jewish dogma of a living God who rules history, has changed the heart and the whole outlook of humanity. It is the foundation of human education, whether of the individual, the group, or the nation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Professor W. M. Haffkine, *Menorah Journal*, April, 1916:

Alone of all religious and philosophic conceptions of man, the faith which binds together the Jews has not been harmed by the advance of research, but, on the contrary, has been vindicated in its profoundest tenets. Slowly and by degrees, Science is being brought to recognize in the universe the existence of One Power, which is of no beginning and no end; which has existed before all things were formed, and will remain in its integrity when all is gone; the source and origin of all, in Itself beyond any conception or image that man can form and set up before his eye or mind. This sum total of the scientific discoveries of all lands and times is an approach of the world's thought to our *Adon Olam*, the sublime chant by means of which the Jew has wrought and will further work the most momentous changes in the world.'

Cf. Rabbiner Dr. J. J. Ruelf, *Der Einheitsgedanke als Fundamentalbegriff aller Religion und Wissenschaft*, Memel, 1880.

<sup>3</sup> The Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, *The Common Weal*, p. 37:

'Let us for a moment imagine that the belief is universally held and inculcated in our schools that the world is a vast comedy, half divine, half infernal, but wholly irrational, capricious, and mysterious; that we are the playthings of ironic chance; and that when the time comes for the terrestrial globe to explode or freeze, mankind will not even survive as a memory, so that in

Not only the hallowing of human life, but the hallowing of history flows from the doctrine of a Holy God, who is hallowed by righteousness.<sup>4</sup> And it is only the Jew, and those who have adopted Israel's Scriptures as their own, who see God's world as one magnificent unity from the beginning even to everlasting, and who look forward to that ultimate triumph of justice in humanity on earth which men call the Kingdom of God; even as it is only the Jew, and those who have gone to school to the Jew, that can pray, וימליך מלכותה 'Thy Kingdom come'.<sup>5</sup>

It was the merit of the Rabbis that Israel at last grasped the infinite significance of the world-embracing and man-redeeming doctrine of the Unity of God. It was due to their unwearied national pedagogy that the fullness of that sacred truth saturated the souls of the lowliest as well as the highest in Israel. It is the Rabbis who invested the six words, שמע ישראל ד' אלהינו ד' אחד,

the sum of things it is indifferent what we do, and how we do it: what argument could we cogently address to those who maintain that there was no such thing as social duty?

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah v. 16; Authorized Prayer Book, *Rosh Hashonah* Prayer, p. 240.

<sup>5</sup> Edwyn Bevan, in *The Nation*, 29 April 1922, writes:

'The European shows the contrast he does to-day, in the matter of religion to the Indian, because Europe, at a particular moment of history, accepted the God of Israel. Greek philosophy, like Indian, saw the world-process as an endless recurrence leading nowhither. The antithesis to all this is the Hebraic view of God and the world. It is essentially Hebraic to pray, "Thy kingdom come." The gap between the earth as it is and the ideal, which the Hebrew feels so painful, the Indian takes as a matter of course. The Hebrew desires to see the gap closed by the two being pulled together; the Indian desires to leave the earth, as a hopeless business, behind him, and escape from the wheel.'

with the importance of a confession of faith; who ordained that we recite them twice daily as part of the morning and of the evening service; that they be repeated by the entire congregation when the Torah is taken out on Sabbaths and Festivals, in the *Kedusha* on these sacred occasions, and especially after the Neilah service at the culmination of the great Day of Atonement.<sup>6</sup> It was due to them that the Shema became the first prayer of innocent childhood, and the last utterance of the dying. They made it the rallying cry by which a hundred generations in Israel were welded together into one Brotherhood to do the will of their Father who is in Heaven, the watchword for the tens of thousands of martyrs who agonized and died for the Unity.<sup>7</sup>

Verily, great has been the reward of the labours of those devoted teachers in Israel. In their own phrase, the reading of the Shema clothed the Jew with invincible lion-strength and endowed him with the double-edged sword of the spirit against the unutterable terrors of his long night of suffering and exile.

But the Rabbis not only trained Israel to a true appreciation of the transcendent importance of the Unity of God; they also defended the Jewish God-idea whenever its purity was threatened by enemies from without or within. They permitted no toying with polytheism, be its disguise ever so ethereal; no departure, even by a hair's breadth, from absolute monotheism. The fight against idolatry and paganism that was begun by the

<sup>6</sup> A. Marmorstein, 'The Unity of God in Rabbinical Literature', in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, i. 467-99.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. the hymn of Kalonymus ben Yehudah in *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 80.



Prophets was continued by the Pharisees. Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people, they taught,<sup>8</sup> started on his career as an idol-wrecker. In legends and similitudes, in parables and polemical discourses, they showed forth the folly and futility of idol-worship, the infamy of the moral degradation evidenced by the heathen deification of the reigning Emperor. Thanks to the teaching of the Pharisees, the Jews alone in the world-wide Roman Empire refused the erection of statues and the paying of divine honours to Caligula. *They saved the honour of the human race*, while all the other peoples slavishly obeyed the decree of the Imperial madman.<sup>9</sup>

The Rabbis defended the Unity of God against the Jewish Gnostics, those ancient heretics who blasphemed the God of Israel, ridiculed the Scriptures, and asserted a duality of divine Powers.<sup>10</sup> And they defended it

<sup>8</sup> Midrash Bereshith Rabba, xxxviii, 13; L. Ginsburg, *Legends of the Jews*, i. 214.

<sup>9</sup> Julius Fuerst, *Glossarium Graeco-Hebraeum*, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> The Rabbis took rigid measures against these heretics, because they recognized the grave danger of moral degeneracy in the Gnostic dualism. The Gnostics often rejected all rules, moral as well as religious; and their position opened the door to the wildest spiritual nihilism. The Rabbis readily granted that some of these men may have been inoffensive and well-meaning, men of learning and high social position in their day; nevertheless, they clearly laid it down (*Ethics of the Fathers*, iii. 15):

‘He who scoffs at sacred things, he who despises the Sacred Festivals, he who makes void the Covenant of Abraham our Father, he who acts barefacedly against the Torah—such a one, even though knowledge of Torah and good deeds be his, has no share in the world to come.’

On this Mishnah, Dr. Travers Herford comments as follows:

‘It does not deny that the person whose case is dealt with may be learned and good; but it says that by acting as he does, he

against the Jewish Christians, who darkened the sky of Israel's monotheism by teaching a novel doctrine of God's sonship, by identifying a man born of woman with God, and by advocating the doctrine of a Trinity.<sup>11</sup>

The long and arduous warfare begun by the Prophets and continued by the Rabbis is not yet ended. The Unity of God has its antagonists in the present age, even as it had in former ages; and to-day it is the sacred duty and privilege of the teachers of Traditional Judaism to stand guard in its defence. In order to belittle Israel's infinite glory as the prophet of monotheism, anti-Semitic writers on religion speak of the Unity of God as a bare, barren, arithmetical idea; as merely 'the minimum of religion'. Some of them contrast the bountiful abundance displayed by Greece in its hundreds of gods and goddesses, by India in its thousands of fantastic deities, with the one God of Israel. 'Only one God—how mean, how meagre!' they exclaim.<sup>12</sup> But Truth is on the march; and the number of those Christian theologians is growing who recognize that, in the words of Hermann Gunkel, 'the Shema is the foundation of all higher, ethical, spiritual

goes contrary to the accepted practice of the community of Israel, disregards what they hold to be essential, undermines the authority which they recognize, and effaces the visible sign of his membership in the community. He may have what seem to him sufficient reason for doing so; but he cannot have it both ways. If he chooses to act as he does, he cannot claim to belong to the community.'—*Pirke Aboth*, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. J. Bergmann, *Juedische Apologetik im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, pp. 80-6.

<sup>12</sup> Renan, Schopenhauer, Lagarde, and H. S. Chamberlain are the chief detractors of monotheism. See Martin Schreiner, *Die juengsten Urteile ueber das Judentum*, pp. 10-14.

religion—an imperishable pronouncement, reverberating to this day in every idealistic conception of the Universe.’<sup>13</sup>

Traditional Judaism must defend the Shema, with all its divine implications, against those of its own children who, instead of a clear, open proclamation of Judaism, whisper the Shema so that even their own ears cannot hear it; against those who dispute its primacy of place in the Jewish consciousness and in the curriculum of the Jewish school-child, and would accord such primacy of place not to the Shema but to the *Hatikhvah*.<sup>14</sup>

Traditional Judaism must defend the Unity of God against those whom we might call the Jewish Christians of our day; those who altogether reject the Unity of God, as well as such Jews and descendants of Jews who are not prepared to be *unhesitating* witnesses of unalloyed and undiluted monotheism. Not so many years ago, one of Abraham Geiger’s most eminent disciples, a man who had abandoned the Liberal rabbinate and, as head of the International Ethical Movement, led thousands of Jews out of Judaism, declared that, instead of a unitary Godhead, we men and women of to-day must conceive of God as a ‘society’. Some may call such a religious position pluralism; but in reality it is no better than stark polytheism. And it

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in *Die Lehren des Judentums*, iv. 44.

<sup>14</sup> One well-known anti-Zionist has repeatedly read into these words that the Shema and the *Hatikhvah* are in conflict; and has thanked me for dividing Jews into two mutually exclusive groups, followers of Zionism and followers of Judaism. The reader can easily see that my words give no support to this controversial fiction.

does not end there. From conceiving of God as a 'society', there is but a step to the Christian conception of Him as a 'family';<sup>15</sup> and this step has been taken, and is being taken, by these Ethical grandchildren of the ghetto.

Nearer home, the founder of the Liberal Jewish movement in England seems to be weakening in his stand for the absolute unity of the Godhead. More than thirty years ago, he complained that the Unity of God has occasionally tended to become a 'fetish' amongst us; while, in his latest book, he does not consider that the doctrine of the Trinity necessarily involves an infraction of the Divine Unity. Let me give you his *ipsissima verba*:

'We have to re-examine and set forth afresh the doctrine of the divine unity. It will be needful for Liberal Jewish theologians to consider the new modern interpretations of the doctrine of the Trinity, and to discuss how far these are, and how far they are not, in accordance with Jewish views of the unity.

'I am well aware that in the purest and most philosophic presentation of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, no infraction of the divine unity is intended. Nor does it follow that because the doctrine has been, and even is, in frequent danger of degeneration into Tritheism, or has often so degenerated, it is therefore not true.'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Originally, the Trinity consisted of 'Father, Mother, and Son'. See Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, p. 86: and *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 'Trinity'.

<sup>16</sup> C. G. Montefiore, *The Old Testament and After*, pp. 28 and 561. (To Mr. Montefiore, the Sacred Scriptures of Israel are always the 'Old' Testament.) See also his *Aspects of Judaism*, p. 192: 'The unity of God has occasionally tended to become a kind of fetish among us.' Achad Ha'am rightly says:

'It is not merely the external observances of Traditional

In other words, the Unity of God is still an open question. It seems that Liberals would be prepared to subscribe to the doctrine of the Trinity, if they were permitted to put their own interpretation on it, or that of advanced Christian theologians.<sup>17</sup> A man need be neither prophet nor son of a prophet to foretell that those who come after them will be less squeamish. One cannot help recalling David Friedländer and his proposals to the Lutheran authorities at Berlin in the year 1799. *His* followers became unconditional members of the dominant Faith. And the experience of

Judaism that fail any longer to appeal to them [the leaders of the Liberal Jewish movement in England]; its innermost spirit, the fundamental ideas by which it is distinguished from Christianity have lost their hold. Hence the movement here [in England] aims right at the heart; it wants to change the *spirit* of Judaism and overthrow its historical foundations.'

<sup>17</sup> In a long and angry letter to the Press, Mr. Montefiore spoke of the above trinitarian quotations from his book as 'deftly chosen'. My reply was as follows:

'If Mr. Montefiore really stands for the absolute Unity of God, he must not ask Jews to "re-examine" the Divine Unity, and call upon them to consider how far the doctrine of the Trinity is or is not in accordance with the Jewish views of the Unity! Neither must he add that it does not at all follow that because the doctrine of the Trinity "has been, and even is, in frequent danger of degenerating into Tritheism, or has often so degenerated, it is, therefore, not true". And if he *does* say these things, he must not object if he is told by Jews that the doctrine of the Unity is still "an open question" to him.

'It is futile for Mr. Montefiore to complain that these sentences are "deftly torn" from their context. Nothing that he may have written in the same paragraph, or in the same book or in a dozen books, can neutralize the plain implications of the above statements. It is those statements that neutralize whatever he may at the same time have written to the contrary. Nothing can dilute the concession expressed in those statements as to the possible truth of the Trinity, or do away with the incontrovertible

early nineteenth-century Berlin is likely to repeat itself in mid-twentieth-century London. Such is not only my view, but also the view of those Liberal guides who passionately desire to remain in Judaism. Dr. S. Schulman, one of the ablest of American Liberal ministers, recently reminded his congregation that some of the Protestant churches which used to send missionaries to the Jews now announce that they have given up doing so, because they no longer believe in 'conversion'. The fact is—as Dr. Schulman explains—there is really no need for them to continue expending the vast sums which they did. Such sermons as one prominent Liberal rabbi has recently delivered on the Founder of Christianity<sup>18</sup>—are doing the work for the Protestant

fact that such concession constitutes a weakening of his stand for the absolute Unity of God.

'If Mr. Montefiore did not mean what is implied in the sentences I quoted in my sermon, he should not have written them: and if, having written them, he now finds that they state more than he meant, it is for him unconditionally to withdraw them.

'Mr. Montefiore should not complain if, after adulation has been showered upon him for over forty years, his views are now being examined without flattery and in the light of history. If he cannot endure criticism, he should have taken the preliminary precaution of not publishing things that are provocative of criticism. He trenchantly criticises the most sacred beliefs of his fellow Jews: his fellow Jews have at least the same right in regard to his unbeliefs.'

*I shall have occasion in these sermons repeatedly to refer to Mr. C. G. Montefiore and the minister of the local movement. This is due simply to the fact that in judging a body of religious practice and opinion, it is best to do so by the sayings and doings of its representative and official spokesmen.*

<sup>18</sup> As Dr. Stephen Wise claims that his sermon has been misunderstood, his action comes under the category of an unintentional *Chillul Hashem* (Ethics of the Fathers, iv. 5). The impression

and the Catholic Churches far better than their own missionaries could possibly do it. English Jews may add that Jewish Christian conferences such as have taken place in London during the last two years, and books with pro-trinitarian leanings like the one from which we have just quoted, likewise render Christian missionary effort, and expense, quite unnecessary.

But surely, we will be told, Judaism must expand and aim at being an influence in the world. 'If Judaism does not, as it were, come to terms with the Gospels'—the founder of the English Liberal movement warns us—'it must always be, I am inclined to think, a creed in a corner, of little influence and with no expansive

it left on Christian opinion throughout the world has been most unfortunate. (Cardinal Silj of Rome and other Catholic spokesmen declare: 'The logical result of the admiration expressed by Rabbi Wise for the Jew of Jews leads to baptism' (*Catholic Herald*, 30 January 1926). A typical comment of American Protestants (see Dr. Schulman's *Decadence in the Reform Jewish Pulpit*) is to the effect that all must recognize in the Founder of Christianity 'qualities which are deserving of admiration, veneration, worship even. The word "worship" may be a little strong for our Hebrew friends as yet.' *As yet*: the implication is that it will come, and all that is required is for more sermons like the one of Dr. Wise to hasten the coming. Dr. Schulman rightly says:

'What Wise did was to urge us to accept Jesus as "soul of our soul". And this we cannot do, because from his teachings the Christian Church arose. If we acknowledge him as teacher, the next step is to acknowledge the Gospels as part of our Bible. How else are you going to know about Jesus unless you study the Gospels?'

James Drummond, among a host of other noted scholars, has shown how the recognition of Jesus as *the* Teacher inevitably led, step by step, to his deification and the consequent growth of the doctrine of the Trinity (*Via, Veritas, Vita*, pp. 305-18).

power.’<sup>19</sup> This argument has received an annihilating reply in the burning words of Achad Ha’am :

‘A Jew may be a Liberal of Liberals without forgetting that Judaism was born “in a corner” and has always lived “in a corner”, apart from the great world, which has never understood it, and therefore hates it. Such was the lot of Judaism before the rise of Christianity, and such it has remained since. Every true Jew, be he Orthodox or Liberal, feels deep down in his being that there is something in the spirit of our people that kept it from the highroad taken by other nations, and impelled it to build up Judaism on those foundations for the sake of which the people remains to this day confined “in a corner”. Let them who still have this feeling remain within the fold; let them who have lost it go elsewhere. *There is no room here for compromise.*’<sup>20</sup>

Such also is the monition of our divine Festival which, year by year, knocks at the gateway of Israel’s soul and bids his children leave behind them all Egypts of the spirit. In to-day’s *Haphtorah* we read: ‘And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him and said unto him: *הלנו אתה אם לצרינו*, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?”’<sup>21</sup>

The question which this Festival of Israel’s birth and freedom, voicing as it were the spirits of our ancestors, addresses to each son and daughter of Israel is likewise *הלנו אתה אם לצרינו* *Art thou for us or for our adversaries?* And in regard to no doctrine or institution of Judaism

<sup>19</sup> C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, p. 906.

<sup>20</sup> *Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, translated by Leon Simon, p. 253.

<sup>21</sup> Joshua v. 13.



must the answer be clearer and more unambiguous than in regard to the fundamental affirmation of Israel: אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ 'One is our God in Heaven as on earth.'

There is a medieval Midrash that warns Israel against the blandishments of the 'sons of Esau', which is the veiled name for the Christian Church in Rabbinic Literature. It reads as follows: 'When the sons of Esau approach you in your exile, and ask, "Whom do you worship? Come to us and let us have one and the same religion, and you, too, shall have a share in Paradise"—answer them, "Our father Jacob commanded us not to give up the belief in the Unity of God. We shall walk in God's ways and shall observe His Law."' <sup>22</sup>

May the Passover help us in our day to prove ourselves' worthy children of our saintly and heroic sires. Amen.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in A. Marmorstein, 'The Unity of God in Rabbinical Literature', *Hebrew Union College Annual*, i. 498.

## II

### THE REVELATION AT MOUNT SINAI

*Sermon preached on the Seventh Day of Passover,  
5686, 5 April 1926, at the Bayswater  
Synagogue, London.*

וַיֵּאמְנוּ בַד' וּבִמֹשֶׁה עֲבָדָיו. 'And they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.' These words were spoken of our fathers at the Red Sea, and they have remained true, century after century, of their descendants after them. Will these words וַיֵּאמְנוּ בַד' וּבִמֹשֶׁה עֲבָדָיו 'And they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses,' remain true of the children of Israel in the future? The answer is plain: only if belief in God and His servant Moses dominates the souls of Israel's men and women of the present, will those that come after them cleave to the God of Israel and to the Torah of Moses.

On the first day of this Festival I took Israel's proclamation of the One God as the theme of my pulpit discourse. To-day I shall deal with a second affirmation of Judaism—the Revelation at Mount Sinai. For, next in importance to the doctrine of the Unity of God, says the well-known Passover song, are the Two Tables of the Covenant which Moses the servant of God brought down from Mount Sinai. שְׁנֵי לֻחוֹת חֲבֵרִית אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ. Alongside the Shema, Judaism places the Covenant at Sinai, when, amid thunder and lightning and the sound of the *Shofar*, God proclaimed unto His People

those Ten Words that are, like their Source, awful in majesty and revered in holiness. Yehudah Halevi gives expression to the most indisputable fact in the popular Jewish consciousness, as well as to the innermost conviction of the authoritative expounders of Judaism, when he declares the Covenant at Sinai *מַעֲמַד הָר סיני* to be the outstanding event in Israel's story.<sup>1</sup> The various exponents of Judaism may at times have differed widely in their views as to the exact nature of revelation and prophecy; but, throughout the ages, they one and all accentuated the historical actuality of the Divine Revelation at Sinai.<sup>2</sup>

And the belief in the Revelation at Mount Sinai is no less basic in the higher life of humanity. The Ten Commandments proved mighty sledge-hammers of the spirit before which the heathendom of antiquity crumbled to dust. In the modern world also, their work in the Divine education of the race and the spiritual emancipation of man is not at an end. 'Mankind needs light, and the Jew is a great torch-bearer.' Such is a recent pronouncement of the Federal Council of the

<sup>1</sup> *Cuzari*, i. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Michael Friedländer, *The Jewish Religion*, pp. 46-9, 192-201, brings the view of Saadyah, Halevi, Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, and Albo. Halevi says (in Dr. Hirschfeld's English edition, p. 61):

'They did not believe Moses had seen a vision in sleep, or that someone had spoken with him between sleeping and waking, so that he only heard the words in fancy, but not with his ears; that he saw a phantom, and afterwards pretended that God had spoken with him. Before such an impressive scene [as described in Exodus, chapter xix] all ideas of jugglery vanished. The divine allocution was followed by the divine writing. The people saw the Divine Writing, as they had heard the Divine Words.'

Evangelical Churches of America.<sup>3</sup> And the light which mankind most sorely needs to-day is the re-affirmation of Moral Law. This need long antedates the Great War. It was the nineteenth century which discovered that we came from the beast ; and ever since that discovery, many of the literary and artistic leaders of the century, and a portion of its directing classes, took it upon themselves to convince us that it was only natural for us to return to the beast. A new and powerful Paganism began its assault against the ancient organized Morality. It dethroned God in the sphere of human conduct ; derided all moral inhibitions ; and declared instinct and inclination to be the truest guides to human happiness. The twentieth century is continuing the instruction begun in the nineteenth. A new ethic has arisen, as subversive as it is godless, which bids each man, woman, or child do that which seems right in his or her own eyes. It teaches that all moral laws are man-made, and that all can therefore be unmade by man. There is, in consequence, on all sides a questioning of the sacredness of human life, a scoffing at the holiness of purity, an angry repudiation of the idea of property. In some lands, this has led to social upheavals, resulting in immemorial human institutions being torn up by the roots. Even in English-speaking countries there is to-day an impatience with moral authority ; and things are tolerated, extenuated, nay encouraged—in fiction, on the stage, in everyday life—that only a generation ago would have been the subject of unqualified condemnation. Ethically, people seem to be groping as in a thick

<sup>3</sup> Through the report of its Commission on Race Relations, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 10 February 1926.

fog; and they ask: 'Why should I?'—a question often accompanied by a subtler 'Why shouldn't I?'<sup>4</sup>

Amid this spiritual confusion, Traditional Judaism stands clear-eyed and unmoved. It proclaims the Divine origin of the Moral Law; that there is an everlasting distinction between right and wrong, an absolute 'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not' in human life, a categorical imperative in religion—high above the promptings of passion, the peradventure of inclination, or the fashion of the hour. God is not only our Father. He is also our Lawgiver; and in the Covenant at Sinai He has made known to the children of men the foundations on which alone human welfare can be built. These eternal laws cannot be broken with impunity, whether by the individual or by a nation. In defying them, a nation, be it ever so strong, lays up for itself nothing but misery and destruction. Some years ago, an eye-witness of the last months of the Romanoff rule<sup>5</sup> told that the Czar's ministers in their dealings with the people in those fateful days had a mystic faith in machine guns. *These*—and not justice, freedom, righteousness—were the pillars on which their régime was based. No wonder that that mighty citadel of tyranny tottered and fell and vanished like an evil dream from earth. Neither can these eternal laws be defied by the individual. The conduct of human life has recently been aptly compared

<sup>4</sup> See the remarkable paper by Louis Zangwill, 'Raw Material' in the *New World*, 1920; Professor Foerster, *Jugendlehre*, and his *Marriage and the Sex Problem*, translated by Dr. M. Booth; also *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, New Volumes (1926), i. 1007 a. I dealt with this subject at greater length in my paper on 'The Moral Education of the Adolescent', *Jewish Chronicle*, 23 February 1925.

<sup>5</sup> Professor Sir Paul Vinogradoff.

to the steering of an aeroplane.<sup>6</sup> An aeroplane, if it is to accomplish its flight, has to be kept inexorably within certain lines. The whole vault of heaven is open to it ; it can go right or left, up or down. But in its freest flight it has to obey certain rules or—it crashes to the ground. Likewise is it with the moral life of man. Shatter the Tables of the Sinaitic Covenant, if you will ; reject the Sacred Scriptures ; dance round the golden calf of the day ; and sycophantically repeat the shibboleths of the heathen mob. You do not thereby get rid of the eternal Law that only in the way of righteousness is life : you merely get rid of the loudest-voiced heralds of the Law. Certain shepherds noticed that the wolves never came near the sheepfold unless the dogs barked. So they killed off the clamorous dogs, thinking that if they could only get rid of the barking they would get rid of the wolves. But, lo ! one dark night, the pack of hungry wolves rushed down from the mountains, sprang into the unguarded fold, and devoured flock, shepherds and all.

Throughout the days of primitive barbarism our forefathers stood as the sentinels of Morality. ‘Among the theocratic nations of the ancient East’—says a noted philosopher<sup>7</sup>—‘the Hebrews seem to us as sober men in a world of intoxicated beings. Antiquity, however, held *them* to be the dreamers among waking folk.’ Ages passed. Our fathers came into touch with Greece and Rome. Once again—one of Israel’s bitter enemies is forced to admit<sup>8</sup>—

‘When all bonds of religion and all national customs were beginning to be broken up in the seeming

<sup>6</sup> Sir Francis Younghusband.

<sup>7</sup> H. Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, iii.

<sup>8</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 497.

cosmos and real chaos of the Graeco-Roman Empire, the Jews stood like a rock in the midst of the ocean ; and thereby preserved for themselves and at the same time for the whole world, an eternal good.'

As in hoary antiquity, as in the Graeco-Roman world, it is now the glorious privilege of Israel to proclaim the holiness of the moral life in the anarchic world of to-day.

By this message to humanity must the Jew stand unswervingly. He too, however, has not always in recent years held aloft the Divine Torch entrusted to him with unwavering hands.<sup>9</sup> Anglo-Jewry is to-day at the cross-roads. A number of its children separate themselves from their brethren in regard to the Revelation at Mount Sinai as in regard to many other distinctive beliefs. The Giving of the Law is to them a myth. 'We have laid aside miracles and supernaturalisms, the burning thorn-bush and the fiery mountain'—said a prominent Liberal Jewish guide some years ago.<sup>10</sup> Though most of their teachers 'approve' of the Ten Commandments, and even condescend to pick and choose in the Torah, neither the Commandments nor the Torah are declared to have any connexion with Moses, the Father of the Prophets. Some of them altogether deny the existence of Moses ; others maintain that we can know very little concerning him.<sup>11</sup> None of them, however, doubts the

<sup>9</sup> Louis Zangwill, *Raw Material*.

<sup>10</sup> Dr. J. Krauskopf, in Meldola de Sola, *Jewish Ministers ?* p. 7. See also *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Old Series, i. 398 ; and below, p. 163.

<sup>11</sup> E. G. Hirsch boasted that he was one of those Jewish ministers who held that Moses never lived. Mr. Montefiore writes of Moses as follows (*Liberal Judaism*, p. 188):

existence of Hammurabi the Lawgiver of Babylon, who flourished nearly 600 years before the days of Moses; and they all rhetorically proclaim their admiration for a whole company of Prophets, who came some six centuries after the days of Moses.<sup>12</sup> And these teachers one and all flatly deny<sup>13</sup> that a Law was divinely given

‘We can never know exactly what this great man did and said, and what laws he promulgated.’

On this question of the historicalness of Moses, *The Failure of the ‘Higher Criticism’ of the Bible*, by Emil Reich, is stimulating reading. It was in this connexion that Emil Reich, among so many others, came to the conclusion ‘that Higher Criticism is bankrupt as a method of research, and pernicious as a teaching of religious truth. It is a perversion of History and a desecration of Religion.’

<sup>12</sup> In regard to the glorification of the Prophets on the part of both Jewish and Christian Liberals, Güdemann is probably right when he says that they magnify the Prophets in order thereby to minimize the personality and mission of Moses (*Das Judenthum*, p. 21).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Rabbi’ M. P. Jacobson, preaching to the Central Conference of American (Liberal) Rabbis in 1914, declared: ‘There has been no law given divinely to Moses on Sinai. We to-day dismiss, and must dismiss, offhand, *a priori*, all miracles as being unworthy of a moment’s intelligent discussion. Only an intellectual craven or an ignoramus yields miracles any credence whatsoever.’ Consistently enough, he proceeded to deny the existence of God, the incumbency of the Moral Law, and the immortality of the soul (*Year-Book of the Central Conference*, p. 251). See below, p. 164 f.

In case this utterance be deemed not quite representative of the Liberal position, the minister of the local synagogue, in the course of one of his missionary meetings held in the Hampstead Town Hall some time ago, addressed the audience somewhat as follows: ‘Is there any one here who, in this twentieth century, actually believes in the Giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai? If so, let him come forward. I should like to have a look at him.’ Other speakers at that meeting were Mr. C. G. Montefiore and Miss



or *could* be given on Sinai. Says the founder of the local Liberal movement:<sup>14</sup>

‘God does not, and, we may even venture to say cannot, reveal himself to man in the absolute way in which the orthodox conception implies.’

Note that, according to this official declaration, God did not reveal the truths of Sinai as described in the 19th and 20th chapters of Exodus, and *He could not do so*. Here we have not only unbelief but dogmatic unbelief. God does not speak, and He *cannot* speak. The Jewish reply is that a God who cannot speak is logically also a God who cannot *hear*. Why then—we wonder—does Liberal Judaism pretend to believe in Prayer? Why do its missionaries busily canvass<sup>15</sup> the members of the

Montagu. On another occasion, he spoke of the Bible story of the Giving of the Ten Commandments as ‘an insult to human intelligence’.

<sup>14</sup> C. G. Montefiore, *Jewish Religious Union: its Principles and its Future*, p. 15.

The late Senior Theological Tutor at Jews’ College, Dr. S. A. Hirsch, in his essay ‘Possibility or Impossibility of a Direct Divine Revelation’ (*The Cabbalists*, pp. 89–110), showed how untenable and unphilosophical Mr. Montefiore’s negative dogmatism was.

<sup>15</sup> I have once before spoken of the not over-scrupulous missionary methods adopted by the leaders of the local Liberal synagogue.

‘At first Liberals proclaimed that their purpose was the reclaiming of the lost sheep of Israel: they would not interfere with those who found satisfaction within the Orthodox camp. But that time is past. Public propaganda meetings, private canvassing for membership, especially, among the women of the older synagogues, and the adoption of Christian conversionist devices to lure Orthodox Jewish children to their fold, are now the rule.’ See below, p. 170.

My revered teacher, the late Dr. M. Jastrow, of Philadelphia, the Talmudic lexicographer, was forced to protest against similar

older congregations with the bait that in their synagogue alone does the weary soul find 'spiritual communion with God in prayer'? A dumb God is a deaf God, an impersonal God, an It; and you cannot honestly pray to an unconscious, nebulous Being chained in mechanical laws. Omar Khayyam, the twelfth-century Liberal Moslem poet, clearly saw this when he sang:

'And that inverted bowl they call the sky,  
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die,  
Lift not your hands to It in prayer—for It  
As impotently rolls as you or I.'

Such a conception of the Supreme Being—a God who canvassing and soliciting among his members on the part of Dr. Krauskopf's Liberal congregation in that city. In the farewell sermon delivered on his retirement from the pulpit in 1892, he seized that solemn moment to utter the following warning:

'Alas, that American congregations are financial ventures! You saw the serpent of competition coming against you—a competition so base and vile that it would not be tolerated to pass unrebuked among the meanest of merchants—a competition low and debased, unscrupulous in the choice of means to entice members away from other congregations to come over to enjoy the most modern improvements in religious style.'

The following words written by Mr. Montefiore's teacher, the great Master of Balliol, are of interest. Jowett (*Sermons, Biographical and Miscellaneous*, p. 5) recalls one of Wyclif's predecessors who denounced the wandering monks for their intrusion on the parochial minister:

'They alienate the minister from his parishioners; they entice young men from the Universities into their orders; they kidnap children, a crime worse than cattle stealing; laymen are afraid to send their sons to Oxford because of their acts. If it be said that the youngsters whom they draw after them will serve God with all the more devotion, and therefore it is allowable to gain them by promises and lies, he replies that "no man should do evil that good may come"; the man-stealing and the lie are both mortal sins.'

cannot speak and cannot hear—is infinitely removed from Israel's living God, our Father and our Saviour who, in the words of Isaiah, is our Judge, our Lawgiver, our King. *בי ד' שפמנו ד' מחקקנו ד' מלכנו הוא יושענו*. It was a profound utterance of the Rabbis that without the Revelation of Sinai the world goes back to *Tohu vorohu*, moral chaos.<sup>16</sup> And present-day Humanity cannot emerge from spiritual confusion unless it shares the true Jewish belief in the sacredness and eternal validity of the Moral Law ; and realizes that only upon the laws of Sinai—'laws' which in the highest Heaven had their birth, neither did the race of mortal men invent them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep'—can human society be broad-based.

One more circumstance in connexion with the Sinaitic revelation we must consider. The Tables of the Law are two, *שני לוחות הברית*—a most important fact often entirely overlooked. One Table enumerates the duties of man to his Maker, the specifically religious duties, such as Thou shalt not take God's name in vain, Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, Honour thy father and thy mother. The second Table deals with the ethical duties of man to his fellow man, such as Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet. And the failure to recognize that these two Tables are inseparable, that *both* Tables of the Law are equally binding on the Jewish conscience, has been, and still is, the cause of much undoing. There are some who confine all their zeal to the first of the Tables: prayer, Sabbath, and punctilious devotion to the customs of the fathers. There are others, again, who build their

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah xxxiii. 22 ; Talm. Sabbath 88b.

entire soul-life on the basis of the second of the Tables, on what we might call the laws of good citizenship. But a Judaism that clings to but one of the Tables is only a half-Judaism, a ruin, absolutely incapable of affording permanent spiritual shelter to the generations that are to come. תמים תהיה עם ד' אלהיך 'Perfect shalt thou be with the Lord thy God.'<sup>17</sup>

In other words, Judaism embraces the whole of life. And because it has at all times and in all lands embraced and regulated the whole life of its loyal children, Judaism is far more than a creed or a theology, greater than a denomination or a Church. *Judaism is a religious civilization*—a spiritual culture aglow with a passion for righteousness. It has its own national language, literature, history, customs, and social institutions.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Deuteronomy xviii. 13.

<sup>18</sup> A fresh presentation of Judaism as a civilization is to be found in Professor M. M. Kaplan's *A New Approach to the Problem of Judaism*. See also I. Zangwill's 'The Position of Judaism', in *The Voice of Jerusalem*, pp. 131-44.

Most Liberals dissent from this view, and boil Judaism down to a few theological principles; see, however, Felsenthal's 'Jewish Theses', in *Bernhard Felsenthal, Teacher in Israel*, pp. 212-27. Felsenthal's position is all the more remarkable as he was one of the pioneer Liberal rabbis of America. The opening paragraphs of his 'Jewish Theses' read:

"Judaism" and "Jewish religion" are not synonymous terms. "Judaism" is more comprehensive than "Jewish religion", for "Jewish religion" is only a part of "Judaism". *Judaism is the composite of the collected thoughts, sentiments, and efforts of the Jewish people*. In other words, Judaism is the sum total of all the manifestations of the distinctively Jewish national spirit.

'The Jewish religion is, then, only a part of Judaism, though by far its most important part. Among no other people on earth has religion occupied so large, so significant a place in their spiritual life, as it has among the Jews. But besides

Rooted in the Torah, the inheritance of a distinct people ; nurtured by the instruction of God-enlightened prophets and seers, sages, and saints ; upheld by the teachings of self-denying ages—this Jewish civilization has resisted all tyrannies, overthrown all idols, and turned the course of history. Its story has chapters in every country on earth ; and bears the impress of every culture. This civilization has freely taken from others, though it ever gives immeasurably more than it takes. Through the Two Tables of Sinai it has, on the one hand, taught mankind to conceive of moral laws as religious laws,<sup>19</sup> in itself the most far-reaching step in the upward march of men and nations ; and, on the other hand, it has moulded the bearers of these Two Tables of the Law into a Kingdom of priests.

The beginnings of this civilization go back to hoary antiquity, to the *שלושה אבות וארבע אמהות*, to the Fathers and Mothers of the Hebrew race.<sup>20</sup> In the word of Scripture, God knew them, and they commanded their children after them to keep the Way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice.<sup>21</sup> None of them are sinless beings. They are men and women circumstanced as we are, beset by the same failings, temptations, and spiritual conflicts as we are. They err and stumble ; but they rise again, ever conscious of the one true way,

religion there were, and there still are, other elements in Judaism.' Cf. Immanuel Wolf's opening essay in Zunz, *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, 1822.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. 'Religion and Morality', by Dr. Salis Daiches, in *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 215.

<sup>20</sup> Our God is 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'.

<sup>21</sup> Genesis xviii. 19.

and ever directing their gaze and steps upward, Godward. Their personality is as distinctive as the divine Charge entrusted to them. Both the Charge and the personality have been transmitted to the children of the Patriarchs for all time ; and they form the pre-suppositions of Jewish civilization. In this Jewish civilization lie enshrined elemental, original forces which to this day have lost none of their effectiveness ; forces that, thank God, are still our sacred possessions.<sup>22</sup>

It is these forces, year by year the Passover reminds us, that must take hold of us, and place the seal of their mastery upon our Jewish life. Year by year, the Passover would rouse us to loyalty to Jewish civilization, loyalty to the People who are its predestined bearers, loyalty to the Torah which created it, and which for ever remains its centre and its circumference ; loyalty to the Two Tables of the Covenant, the keystone of the Torah and the holiest of revelations given to the children of men. In a word, our primal duty is faith in the God of Israel and in His servant Moses. וַיֵּאמְרוּ בְר' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עֲבָדוּ. Amen.

<sup>22</sup> J. L. Magnes, *Elements of Judaism*, Inaugural Address, Congregation Bnai Jeshurun, New York, 1911.



### III

## THE FIVE BOOKS OF THE TORAH

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Naso 5686, 22 May 1926,  
at the Dalston Synagogue, London.*

תורת אמת נתן לעמו אל

על יד נביאו נאמן ביתו

‘A true Torah God gave unto His people,  
By the hands of Moses, His faithful prophet.’

This verse from the Yigdal hymn is the poetic rendering of one of the articles of the Jewish Creed as formulated by Maimonides ; and on this Sabbath, which follows the Festival that from time immemorial has been known as *זמן מתן תורתנו* ‘the season of the Giving of our Torah’, my discourse shall be on the truth of the Five Books of the Torah *חמשה חומשי תורה* which Moses handed to us as an inheritance of the Congregation of Jacob.

The Torah is the sacred source of everything the Jew has been and has done in the world, the very soul and breath of his Jewish being. In the days of old the Psalmist sang:<sup>1</sup>

‘Unless Thy Torah had been my delight,  
I should then have perished in mine affliction.  
I have seen an end of all perfection ;  
But Thy commandment is exceeding broad.  
O how I love Thy Torah !  
It is my meditation all the day.  
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet  
And light unto my path.’

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxix, verses 92, 96, 97, and 105.



And, in our own times, a modern of the moderns, a neo-Hebrew poet who was poles asunder from the Psalmist in spirit, exclaimed:<sup>2</sup>

'The Torah has been our consolation,  
Our help in exile and sore privation.  
Lost have we all we were wont to prize:  
Our holy temple a ruin lies;  
Of kingdom and priesthood are we bereft;  
Our Faith is our only treasure left.  
We have sacrificed all. We have given our wealth,  
Our homes, our honours, our land, our health,  
Our lives—like Hannah her children seven—  
For the sake of the Torah that came from heaven.'

These two voices are typical of the Jew's love and utmost devotion to the Torah in all the ages. And not the Jew alone, but men of all times and races have by means of the Torah seen God face to face. Think of the influence of the stories of Genesis and the Deliverance from Egypt, of the Decalogue and the laws of Holiness, on the lives of men and nations. If we judge this Divine book by its results, what an elemental, majestic force is Israel's Torah. It shattered not only the idols but the stone heart of antiquity, taught mankind the doctrine of One Holy God who is the Father of all men, proclaimed the great commandment 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', and implanted pity within the soul of humanity.

My purpose, however, this morning is to consider the fact that for over a hundred years this Torah has been subjected by non-Jewish theologians to attacks of ever-

<sup>2</sup> J. L. Gordon, *Simchas Torah Song*, translated from the Yiddish by Alice Lucas and Helena Frank, see *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 255; also p. 214 for Professor Haffkine's utterance on the *Sepher Torah* in Jewish life.

increasing violence. They not only dispute the sacredness and divine inspiration of the Pentateuch, but deny its Mosaic authorship as well as the trustworthiness of the events narrated therein. In fact, hostility to the Torah is now a tradition in academic circles on the Continent; and, in recent decades, has also become quite general in the universities and Protestant theological colleges of the English-speaking world.

Liberal Judaism endorses this non-Jewish view of the Pentateuch,<sup>3</sup> and Liberal Jewish scholars have taken their share in its 'higher criticism'.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally echoes of this alien unfriendliness to the Torah may be heard even in synagogues that are unwilling to be classed as Liberal.

Surely nothing can conceivably be more vital to Jews and Jewesses of to-day than to be fortified against an error which, if unchecked, threatens the whole edifice of their spiritual life.<sup>5</sup> And if they are to be so fortified, they must, in this holy war on behalf of the Torah, as in every war, understand the strength and aims of the enemy, as well as the strategy of the enemy's attacks.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> 'Moses never lived' (Emil Hirsch); Mr. Montefiore's books, and especially his notorious article in the *Nineteenth Century*, November 1921.

<sup>4</sup> Geiger, Kohler, Maybaum, &c. Mr. Montefiore's *Hibbert Lectures*, 1892, are a restatement of the position of the German radicals (except Lecture IX, which is due to the, acknowledged, influence and help of Schechter, see p. 465).

<sup>5</sup> Huxley and his fellow Rationalists were delighted when these views began to be actively spread by Liberal theologians. 'If Satan had wished to devise the best means of discrediting revelation'—he said—'he could not have done better.'

<sup>6</sup> On the need and duty of Jewish defence of our Sacred

A short survey of the higher criticism of the Pentateuch in recent generations is indispensable for such understanding. That criticism reached its high water mark of destructiveness during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Among other things, it denied the historicity of the Patriarchs. One critic declared Abraham to be a 'free creation of unconscious art'; another turned him into a 'fetish stone'; a third, identified him with the 'starry heavens'; and a fourth made of him 'a sacred locality'. The founder of the local Liberal Jewish movement, in his *Hibbert Lectures*,<sup>7</sup> has the following to say on the שלשה אבות: 'As they are presented to us in Genesis, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons, are not historical personalities, but legendary heroes.' Liberals do not, however, as a rule follow

Scriptures see Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*. Mr. H. M. Wiener writes (*Jewish Chronicle*, 20 January 1922):

'Once more, as so often in our history, we are called upon to defend what we hold dearest from a spiritual foe of immense power and prestige. It is for us to decide whether we shall go down in history as Jews who were unable to preserve Judaism, or whether we shall be remembered as men who know how to accomplish the tasks of their generation in a spirit not altogether unworthy of their ancestors.'

<sup>7</sup> C. G. Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 11 and 12. Mr. Montefiore bases his view on that of Dillmann. However, the latter in his posthumously published work on Old Testament Theology wrote: 'We have no right to explain these Genesis narratives as pure fiction. They rest in essentials on sound historical recollection' (quoted in James Orr, *Problem of the Old Testament*, p. 59). Mr. Montefiore will no doubt indicate this retraction on the part of Dillmann in the next reprint of his *Hibbert Lectures*.

Dr. Julian Morgenstern, President of the Liberal Jewish Theological College at Cincinnati, advocates the teaching of the mythical view of the Patriarchs to Jewish children in religion classes.

the preposterous phantasies of the still more radical critics,<sup>8</sup> who reduce the story of all the Patriarchs, prophets, priests, and rulers before the days of Maccabees to variants of this or that Babylonian epic or Oriental myth.

One man dominated this whole school of thought for the last half-century—Julius Wellhausen. He was the oracle, and a host of interpreters repeated and spread his views throughout the Western world. He and his followers altogether deny the supernatural in history, and start with the assumption that revealed religion is impossible. They postulate what is called the evolutionary view of history. They brush aside the traditional Bible-account of Israel's history and religion as nothing more than a theological fairy-tale. According to them, the Israelites down to the days of Solomon and beyond were heathen nomads of a low order, worshippers of stones, trees, and totems. Therefore, to speak of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch is absurd; the art of writing, they tell us, was not known in Israel before the days of David. Like all primitive nations, Israel of course had bards and singers who recited and composed legends and tales concerning the exploits of the ancestral heroes; and, in the course of centuries,

<sup>8</sup> Cheyne, Winckler, and Jensen. However, 'the last word in negative, destructive and irreverent Biblical Criticism' is, according to Dr. Hoschander (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, April 1926), that of Dr. S. Bernfeld, in his three-volume Hebrew work, recently published. Scholars will take no notice of it; but 'the book may have a disastrous effect on the Jewish youth in Eastern Europe. Its study is liable to destroy the last shred of their belief in the religion and traditions of Israel'.

these tales assumed a fixed literary form in two distinct collections which are now embodied in portions of Genesis and Exodus. They call one of these collections E, and the other J; and, on account of some alleged differences in style, they assign one to the ninth pre-Christian century and the other to the eighth—that is, six or seven hundred years after Moses. A century or so later, they tell us, a new era opened in Israel. There arose the prophets Amos and Hosea, followed by their greater successors Isaiah and Jeremiah. It is the Prophets, we are assured, who are the real founders of monotheism, and of whatever ethical religion there was in ancient Israel. The Book of Deuteronomy, they assert, was largely influenced by prophetic teaching, and is a product of the times of King Josiah, though it was passed off by its authors as a work of Moses. Then came the exile to Babylon and the return under Ezra. Ezra and his priestly school, the critics dogmatically declare, wrote the greater part of the Torah—Leviticus and Numbers, besides considerable sections of Exodus and even of Genesis. Ezra's alleged share of the Torah they speak of as P. These distinct documents, however, E, J, and P, do not exist separately or even side by side. At various stages, we are asked to believe by these 'higher critics', these different parts have been combined and edited by a succession of redactors; with the result that sometimes the first verse in a chapter is assigned to E, one half of the next verse to J, and the other half to P; while the third verse may be due to a redactor who attempted to harmonize the original, conflicting sources of the narrative.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Professor Paul Haupt illustrated this critical dissection of the

Wellhausen and his followers thus tear the Torah to tatters, and reduce its contents to legend and fiction.<sup>10</sup> Yet even this is not the worst. The moral influence of the Torah, he proclaims, was unmitigatedly evil. It robbed Israel of its old, natural, heathenism; and it put in its stead gloom and puritanism and self-righteousness; it deadened the conscience and took the soul out of religion.<sup>11</sup> And all this unheard-of condemnation of a venerable Faith that is the mother of the two monotheistic world-religions, Wellhausen pronounces in concise and mordant sentences, richly spiced with coarse Bible narrative by publishing the various segments in different colours. He called his edition of the Scriptures the Polychrome, or the Rainbow, Bible. The late Dr. Schechter not inappropriately called it the 'Jezebel' Bible.

<sup>10</sup> Even the moderates among Wellhausen's interpreters, like Dr. Driver and his English, American, and Scottish colleagues, work for the undermining of our confidence in the trustworthiness of the Hebrew Scriptures. Their very starting-point is to discredit the sources on which the history and religion of Israel are based, 'It is easy to prove any theory,' says H. M. Wiener, 'if only the facts are selected judiciously.' And Wellhausen and his followers are most judicious in *selecting* their facts. Whenever the facts are against their theory, the facts are altered, or pronounced to be a later gloss in the document in which they occur, or they declare that document to be a sheer forgery. Emil Reich rightly compares the method of the critics in dealing with the Bible to that of the inquisitors in witch-trials. Mere possibilities are advanced as proof conclusive; insinuations are levelled at the most natural and simple passages in the Bible; and the falsity of the document is taken for granted from the very outset. 'It is high time', he exclaims, 'that this scandalous witch-trial of the Bible be put an end to' (*The Failure of the Higher Criticism*, pp. 85-117).

<sup>11</sup> Wellhausen, *History of Israel and Judah*, p. 223 ('So viel an ihm liegt, entseelt es die Religion und verdirbt die Moral').

witticisms and mockery.<sup>12</sup> His disciples better the instruction: and in Friedrich Delitzsch, the master's flippant sneering has developed into a lava-torrent of burning hatred. Delitzsch blasphemously denounces the Hebrew Scriptures as 'The Great Deception'; and he calls upon the Christian world to cast off the incubus of the Jewish Bible. Two mild examples of his manner must suffice. He finds the unspeakable Ashera-worship of the idolatrous Canaanites to be poetic and beautiful; and whereas he is irritated into frenzy whenever he has occasion to speak of the teachers, heroes, and prophets of Israel, he has nothing but admiration for Haman!<sup>13</sup> In Friedrich Delitzsch the 'higher criticism' of the Pentateuch finds its logical conclusion. It is seen in its true colours as higher anti-Semitism, bankrupt as a method of research, a perversion of history, and a desecration of religion.

<sup>12</sup> It is to the credit of Mr. Montefiore that he protested against this habit as early as 1889. He writes:

'They (the Critics) freely use the language of mocking irreverence. . . . In Wellhausen who is greatly responsible for this ugly fashion, brilliancy and even genius cover the gravity of the descent from the language of Ewald. But in the hands of the ordinary clever and industrious German professors, this laborious humour is quite unendurable, and the anti-Semitic prejudice which is presumably at the bottom of it all is only too easily and clumsily revealed' (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, Old Series, i. 281).

Mr. Montefiore's ninth Hibbert Lecture is of lasting worth as a vindication of Jewish Legalism. He should induce his own followers to read it.

<sup>13</sup> In three trenchant articles published by H. M. Wiener in *Jewish Chronicle* of December 1921 and January 1922, he has convincingly shown that, in his views on the Bible and especially on the Book of Esther, Mr. Montefiore is not uninfluenced by Friedrich Delitzsch.

You wonder: Did Orthodox Jewish leaders during all these fifty years calmly permit such monstrous misrepresentation which subverts the historical foundations of the Bible, and is utterly destructive of the whole Jewish religion, to go unchallenged? Did they not daily hear the *בַּת קוֹל*, the Heavenly Voice, which, as Rabbi Joshua ben Levi tells us, resounds from Mount Sinai, proclaiming the words *אוי להם לבריות מעלבוניה של תורה* 'Woe to mankind for contempt of the Torah?'<sup>14</sup> Was there no counter-criticism of any kind, from any quarter?

It is necessary to answer this question in some detail, as the opinion is sedulously nursed in interested circles that the arguments of the critics are so unanswerable that the conservatives have only met them with silence. As a matter of fact, within a very short time of the appearance of Wellhausen's books, Dr. David Hoffmann, of the Rabbinical Seminary at Berlin, as far back as 1879, began to subject the crucial points of Wellhausen's theory to a devastating examination.<sup>15</sup> His example was followed by a number of independent non-Jewish scholars in Germany, England, Holland, Switzerland, and America.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ethics of the Fathers, vi. 2. Authorized Prayer Book, p. 205.

<sup>15</sup> Embodied in his *Die Wichtigsten Instanzen gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese*, 1904 and 1916. See also Graetz (*Geschichte*, ii. 408-39).

<sup>16</sup> Only a few outstanding names can here be mentioned: Germany—Professor Hommel of Munich (*The Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, 1897). England—Professor Sayce of Oxford (*The 'Higher Criticism' and Verdict of the Monuments*, 1894); *Lex Mosaica* by Sayce, Rawlinson, Wace, &c., 1894; Baxter (*Sanctuary and Sacrifice*, 1896); and A. H. Finn (*The Unity of the Pentateuch*). America—Professor W. H. Green of Princeton University (*The Higher*



The most shattering evidence, however, against the higher critical position came in the year 1887 with the discovery, in the village Tel-el-Amarna, Egypt, of hundreds of tablets that were written in the generation before Moses by the Egyptian governors of Palestine to the Pharaoh of that day. They give a first-hand description of the then conditions in Palestine; and thus at once dissipated the myth that writing was unknown in the Mosaic age.<sup>17</sup> Then followed the finding, in 1902, of a 4,000 years'-old code of laws, exactly as it was promulgated by Hammurabi, the mighty ruler of Babylon, who was a contemporary of Abraham and is mentioned in the Book of Genesis.<sup>18</sup> It was as if the

*Criticism of the Pentateuch*, 1895). The ordinary reader will find their results summarized in James Orr's invaluable *The Problem of the Old Testament*, 1905, and, in a briefer form, in McKim's *The Problem of the Pentateuch*, 1905.

<sup>17</sup> Professor Sellin of the University of Berlin, who is unquestionably to-day the leading Bible critic—an exegete, excavator and historian of originality—says:

‘That the question should ever have been raised whether Moses could have known how to write, appears to us now absurd. Every petty Canaanitish “king” of a city state had his scribe who conducted his correspondence and kept the necessary lists.’  
*Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 12.

Among other results of that discovery, every reasonable doubt as to the authenticity of the account of Malchizedek, King of Salem, in Genesis xiv, is now removed.

<sup>18</sup> This discovery was most disturbing to the critics. One of the ‘finalities of scholarship’ according to them was that the Prophets were before the Law, and therefore the Pentateuch was not, and could not have been, Mosaic. Now it was seen that as early as the time of Abraham there was not only law, but a code of laws full of remarkable detail which shed a new light on the lives of the Patriarchs.

words of the Psalmist<sup>19</sup> אמת מארץ תצמח 'Truth shall spring out of the earth', had become literally fulfilled; and the very stones of the Nile and the Euphrates valleys, of Palestine, Crete, and Asia Minor, had given their decisive testimony in vindication of the Torah. 'We have travelled far from the time', exclaimed Professor David H. Müller of Vienna University,<sup>20</sup> 'when scholars attempted to turn the Patriarchs into mythical beings. To-day that attempt itself almost appears mythical.'

Gradually the revolt began in Wellhausen's own ranks; some of his principal supporters abandoned the critical theory of separate documents in the Bible-narrative,<sup>21</sup> and others repudiated the absolutely unproved dogma of the gradual evolution of Jewish history and the Hebrew religion. Monotheism, they now declare, made its appearance at the beginning of Israel's history,

The discovery of the Code of Hammurabi has now been followed by the discovery and decipherment, within the last decade, of the Hittite Code, dating from 1350 B.C., of which all trace had been lost for over three thousand years; as well as by the excavations in 1924, conducted by the British Museum at Ur, the birthplace of Abraham; and those at Mizpah, the home of the Prophet Samuel, reported in *The Times* of 20 May 1926.

<sup>19</sup> Psalm lxxxv. 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Die Gesetze Hammurabis*, p. 139.

<sup>21</sup> Eerdmans, of Leyden University, who succeeded Abraham Kuenen, the co-founder with Wellhausen of the thoroughgoing evolutionary hypothesis in regard to the religion of Israel, in 1908 publicly repudiated the documentary view of the Pentateuch. In none of the great Dutch universities is pure Wellhausenism any longer taught. And outside Holland, Professor Max Loehr, of the University of Königsberg, has now come to the conclusion that there never was such a separate document as P.

in the time of Abraham.<sup>22</sup> The example of Greece with its successive epochs of alternating civilizations—Mycenaean, Homeric, Athenian—shows that a barbaric period in Israel's history like that of the Judges could very well have been preceded by the creative epoch of Moses. For there are ebb- and flow-tides in the history of the human spirit, and human progress is rarely in a straight, but far more often in a zigzag, line. It is, furthermore, an absurdity to deny Israel's sojourn and slavery in Egypt. No people has ever yet *invented* a disgraceful past for itself. If it were merely a fiction, the story of Israel's slavery in Egypt would be quite inexplicable—in fact, a psychological miracle. Furthermore, the Exodus could not have been carried out in the absence of a guiding and towering Personality. Apart from a great directing genius—Moses the Leader, Moses the Lawgiver—the whole story of that period would remain a riddle. Therefore Moses, the Exodus, and the Legislation at Sinai all belong to strict history.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For a long time Professors Sayce (Oxford) and Hommel (Munich) were alone in protesting that ancient Hebrew Literature was not a tissue of illusions and fabrications, but authentic records; and that Wellhausen's entire position was being contradicted by evidence that defied contradiction. Baentsch, of the University of Jena, was among the earliest of Wellhausen's chief lieutenants to follow them and emancipate himself from the spell of his master.

'First of all we must rid ourselves of the notion', he wrote in 1906, 'as if the pre-Mosaic age in Israel was barbarous or semi-barbarous; with animistic tree, stone and ancestor worship; with fetishism, totemism, witchcraft and other such beautiful things. To-day we know that the age of Abraham was the outcome of a religious development that goes back many, many thousands of years' (*Monotheismus*, p. 107).

<sup>23</sup> Professor R. Kittel (Leipzig), *The Religion of the People of Israel*, 1924, p. 49; and Paul Volz, *Mose*, 1907.

The whole critical theory is to-day being questioned on fundamental issues ;<sup>24</sup> and of the work of Wellhausen and his school hardly one stone remains upon the other.<sup>25</sup> We note with gratification that it was an English Jew, Mr. Harold M. Wiener, who proved from the standpoint of the critics themselves the worthlessness of the oldest of the tests—that of the different divine Names—which first suggested the division of the Torah-narrative into such imaginary documents

<sup>24</sup> Professor Adam Welch, *Expositor*, May 1923 ; quoted in Dr. A. Cohen's splendid paper, 'The Bible and Modern Criticism', read before the Conference of Anglo-Jewish Preachers, 1923.

<sup>25</sup> *The People and the Book*, Oxford University Press, has the following lament on the present position of Bible criticism :

'Everywhere uncertainties abound. G. Hölscher remarks that there is hardly any department of the history of Hebrew literature or religion in which the assertions of investigators are not at complete variance with one another, and he goes the length of saying that of the work of Wellhausen and his school hardly one stone remains upon another.' p. 218.

Professor Sellin speaks of the 'perpetual flux' that has set in among the views of the critics ; and roundly declares that to-day it is mere nonsense to speak of 'assured results' (Professor Driver's favourite phrase) in Bible criticism.

Such is the opinion of the *leaders*—but it is not the opinion of the interpreters and popularizers, of the hacks and journeymen of theological literature. They have learned nothing during the last quarter-century and forgotten nothing—a tribe of Rip Van Winkles. Dr. Hoschander writes in the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, April 1926, that in the mass of critical text-books, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries, the views and theories of moderate critics who do *not* attack the historical character of the Pentateuch are completely ignored by the present generation of Biblical scholars, especially in England and America. The latter have only one criterion for the truth of a theory—if it *contradicts* Biblical tradition.

as E and J.<sup>26</sup> In the same way, the difficulties in assigning Deuteronomy to a late period, as well as the objections to the dates assigned by the critics to the various 'sources', are seen to be insuperable.<sup>27</sup> Even the glorification of the Prophets which all the critics indulge in at the expense of the Lawgiver, does not fit the facts. Not one of the Hebrew Prophets pretends to bring a *new* message. Thus, Hosea complains of absence of 'דעת ד' 'knowledge of the Lord', in the land. In other words, there was a well-known body of religious teaching and experience, hallowed by age and sacred association, which his contemporaries were neglecting. And Micah exclaims, '*It had been told thee*, O man, what is good and what the Lord requireth of thee.'<sup>28</sup> If, as Wellhausen's die-hard followers still stoutly maintain, the Decalogue was not in existence till the age of King Manasseh, and if all ethical religion only made its appearance with the Prophets, then Israel did not

<sup>26</sup> Wiener's original and stimulating books have been translated into German by Dahse, who independently reached similar results. Wellhausen, who rarely took notice of his critics except to vilify them, admitted that Dahse (and therefore Wiener) had touched the Achilles' heel of the prevailing documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch. On this whole question of distinguishing separate 'sources' by means of alleged differences in style, Lecky has well said:

'I may be pardoned for expressing my belief that this kind of investigation is often pursued with an exaggerated confidence. Plausible conjecture is too easily mistaken for positive proof. Undue significance is attached to what may be mere casual coincidences, and a minuteness of accuracy is professed in discriminating between different elements in a narrative which cannot be attained by mere internal evidence.'

<sup>27</sup> Professor Adam Welch, of Edinburgh, and many others.

<sup>28</sup> Baentsch, *Monotheismus*, p. 106.

previously possess any 'knowledge of the Lord'. By what right, then, dared the Prophets condemn Israel for moral defects?

And, finally, the critical theory leaves the most vital question unexplained. Why did those preachers of righteousness called the Prophets arise only in Israel? Again, if there was nothing divine or *sui generis* about Israel, if Israel was merely like the other heathen Semitic tribes, how is it that Israel did not disappear during the centuries of its servitude in Egypt, or during the rude days of the Judges, or under the idolatrous kings? Why does the story of Moab, for example, lose itself obscurely and fruitlessly in the desert, while Israel's story issues in eternity? Wellhausen admits that he cannot answer these questions.<sup>29</sup> This signifies *the collapse of the evolutionary theory of history* as applied to the religion of Israel.

Medieval Jewish mystics tell us, 'God, the Torah, and Israel—these represent one spiritual unity.' The latter-day warfare against the Torah well illustrates the profundity of this thought. Every attack on the Torah is at the same time an assault against Israel, as well as a revolt against the Spiritual and the Divine in history and human life. It is as if the pagan forces of our age had assembled together, and in their heathen rage resolved to break the bonds of the Hebrew heritage to humanity, and cast away the moral restraints which Israel first taught mankind. But, as in the days of the Psalmist,<sup>30</sup> *ישב בשמים ישחק*

<sup>29</sup> See his *Die Christliche Religion*, p. 15, in *Kultur der Gegenwart*; and his article, 'Moab', in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, columns 3177 and 3178.

<sup>30</sup> Psalm ii. 2-4.

אדני ילעג לכו, 'He that sitteth in the heavens laugheth, the Lord hath them in derision.' The eternal promise made to Israel applies to Israel's Torah: <sup>81</sup> כל כלי יוצר עליך, 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn.' And we, the descendants of those who stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, will continue to bless Him who is the God of truth, whose Law is a Law of truth, whose prophets are prophets of truth, and who aboundeth in deeds of goodness and truth. We will continue to lift the *Sepher Torah* on high and exclaim, וזאת התורה, 'This is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel at the command of the Lord.' We will continue to sing—and teach our children to sing—

תורת אמת נתן לעמו אל

על יד נביאו נאמן ביתו

'A true Torah God gave unto his people,

By the hands of Moses, His faithful prophet.'

Amen.

<sup>81</sup> Isaiah liv. 17.

'That the "higher criticism" ever obtained the following which it has had will be the marvel of the future. Like every other form of assault upon the Word of God, it will have its little day and die.' *Lex Mosaica*, 1894, p. 186.

## IV

### THE JEWISH LIFE

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Chazon 5686,  
17 July 1926, at the New Synagogue,  
Stamford Hill, London.*

THE web of fast and festival, symbol and ceremony, that goes to make up the Jewish Life, and especially its *distinctive* rites and customs, have in all ages provoked the derision of heathens, both non-Jewish and Jewish: <sup>1</sup> דברים שיצר הרע ואומות העולם משיבין עליהם. Pagan and Jewish Christians made merry over Jewish observance as far back as the second century; and Pagan and Christian Jews echo their mockery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>2</sup> A lucid and sympathetic

<sup>1</sup> Rashi, Gen. xxvi. 5; cf. Talm. Yoma 67b.

<sup>2</sup> For ancient times see J. Bergmann, *Juedische Apologetik im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, pp. 97-119. For specimens of Jewish ridicule of Judaism in modern times, see Meldola de Sola, *Jewish Minis'e's*?

The fashion of ridiculing Orthodox Judaism has now spread to England. With a thirst for sensationalism and publicity that has become a veritable disease in the Liberal camp, their spokesmen resort to interviews in the general Press, to air their contempt for their fellow Jews who still cling to 'antiquated' and 'trivial' religious laws and customs, and to boast of their own 'modernity'. As Dr. Buechler recently remarked, 'What a fine sense these "prophetic" Jews have of the duty of walking humbly with thy God!' I am not sanguine enough to believe that anything I can say will teach them either tolerance for the religious opinions of fellow Jews or—religious delicacy.



presentation of this Jewish Life is sorely needed by the men and women who, through lack of opportunity to learn the meaning and message of Judaism, are ill at ease in Zion ; as well as by those who, by denuding their homes of all Jewish observance, believe that they are drawing farther and farther away from what they call 'the ghetto'.<sup>3</sup> I pray to God that by means of the examination of concrete aspects of Jewish duty in this and forthcoming pulpit addresses, it be given me to clarify opinion, remove doubt, and strengthen love for our Faith in the minds of both groups.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Some years ago, in a paper 'On Renaissance and Culture', I showed that sympathetic appreciation of the ghetto Jew might well be taken as a touchstone of a man's culture. The same thing is true in regard to the ghetto itself. To the semi-educated, the word 'ghetto' is associated only with feelings of shame and humiliation. The slum-mind cannot grasp the grandeur, martyrdom, humanity of the life in the ghetto, and has no admiration for the manner in which 'the stormed-tossed Jewish soul could evolve its own characteristic life even at the darkest hour, and adapt itself, indomitably and successfully, to the most adverse circumstances in its history' (Cecil Roth): the sympathies of that mind rather go out to the forces that shut the Jew in the ghetto and with the men who indulged in occasional pogroms against its inhabitants. The high-water mark of this mentality was reached at the recent Liberal Jewish conference, when a prominent leader announced: 'We seek God and not ghettos.'

<sup>4</sup> This, and *not* to re-write the Jewish Law, to explain it away, or to abolish it, is the purpose of the 'Affirmations of Judaism'. I clearly stated this purpose, and in unmistakable terms, when on 30 January 1926 I announced these sermons at the conclusion of *The New Paths*. My exact words were:

'My task is only half done: Traditional Judaism is more than the negation of a negation. It is that vivid, vitalizing realization of God which found eternal expression at the Red Sea: "The

Much depends on our manner of approach towards the Jewish life. Epictetus, the noblest of the ancient philosophers, tells us: 'Everything has two handles; the one by which it can be borne, and the other by which it cannot be borne.' Judaism likewise has two handles; the name of one handle is *ridicule*—that is the handle by which it cannot be borne. Approach your Faith in a spirit of hostility; be blind to all its beauties and see in it nothing but laws, laws, laws; harp on the difficulties it places in the way of its followers; exultantly point to the disharmonies in some sections of Jewry between profession and practice—and you may succeed in framing a telling indictment of Judaism. You can, if you adopt the same method, frame an indictment against the State, against Society, against Life, nay, against Providence itself. But it is not the sign of the freeman to make merry over the sanctities of his fathers, neither is it, for that matter, the way of wisdom. There is an Eastern tale of a merchant travelling in a vast desert who is deceived by a mirage into the belief that fresh water is at last near. In order to reach the pleasant land the sooner, he hastily emptied the jars of precious water which he carried with him from home. Alas! it was only a mirage; and before long the poor merchant had occasion bitterly to repent his fatal haste. He and his men perished miserably in

Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation; this is my God and I will glorify Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him." Alas, that to many this living religion of Orthodox Judaism is but a matter of hearsay. I therefore hope to supplement the series of addresses which I conclude to-day with another series on the foundations and affirmations of Traditional Judaism, on the problems and duties that the present hour brings to the loyal sons and daughters of Israel.'

the desert. Likewise, wherever Jews have been deceived by the mirage of an illusory Messianic Era to exchange old lamps for new, wherever—in the words of Jeremiah<sup>5</sup>—עזבו מקור מים חיים לחצב להם בארות בארות נשברים—‘they have forsaken the Fountain of Living Waters and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water’, the result has been the same: they are left God-less and Torah-less, a rabble dying in the wilderness; and they disappear from the arena of Jewish history.

It is far otherwise if we approach the Jewish life in a spirit of *reverence*; if we seek to understand it from within. The centre and circumference of Jewish life is the Torah, God’s inexhaustible revelation to Israel. But the real Torah is not merely the written text of the Five Books of Moses; the real Torah is the meaning enshrined in that text, as expounded, interpreted, and unfolded in ever greater fullness by the Congregation of Israel.<sup>6</sup> That authoritative interpretation of the Torah by successive generations of Sages and Teachers for more than two thousand years—the Oral Law—forms the soul of Judaism, and gives it individuality and

<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah ii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> R. Travers Herford, *Pirke Aboth*, p. xv, writes:

‘The written text of the Pentateuch might be compared to the mouth of a well; the Torah was the water which was drawn from it. The Talmud and the Midrash represent the Torah as it was interpreted, its contents made known, its teaching made explicit instead of implicit. The study of the Torah, therefore, means much more than the study of the Pentateuch. It means the study of the revelation therein imparted, the Divine thought therein disclosed. Apart from the direct intercourse of prayer, the study of the Torah was the way of closest approach to God; it might be called the Beatific Vision. To study Torah was to the Rabbis, ‘to think God’s thoughts after Him’.

uniqueness among the living faiths of men. It has been described as

‘a code which left the intellect and the emotions free to speculate and wonder, to produce philosophy and poetry, but which fettered the will, leaving the spirit to transcend the law in love and self-sacrifice, but not to fall below it; so that even those Philistines who for religion—the music of life—had no ear, should at least be kept sane and strong and mechanically moral, centres of happiness to themselves and channels for a finer posterity. They should be kept from playing wrong notes and jarring chords, if they could not give us sonatas and symphonies of their own.’<sup>7</sup>

The aim and purpose of the multitudinous laws and regulations of the Oral Law are nothing less than the bringing of the whole of human existence under the hallowing influence of Religion; in brief, *the sanctification of human life*. Religious observance, historic commemoration, sacred precept, and hallowed custom keep ever before the Israelite the thought of consecration; and are themselves the Divine agencies to transform that thought into a reality, and keep alive within him the sense of the Presence of God.<sup>8</sup> ‘The *mitzvah*’, a noble teacher in Anglo-Jewry taught us, ‘is the ladder connecting heaven and earth.’<sup>9</sup>

A fair example, because it is the supreme example, of

<sup>7</sup> I. Zangwill, ‘The Jewish Renaissance’ in *The Judaeans* (New York, 1898), i. 124.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm xvi. 8. לִנְגִּדִי תָמִיד שׁוֹיִתִּי ד’ forms the opening of the most authoritative commentary of the *Shulchan Aruch*, that of R. Moses Isserles. He declares these words: ‘I have set the Lord always before me’, to be the motto of the faithful Israelite in all his upward strivings. See *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 190.

<sup>9</sup> M. Jung, *The Sinaist*, i. 3.

the hallowing of life under the sanctifying influence of the *mitzvah* as developed by the Oral Law, is the Sabbath. That sacred day is the perennial fountain of idealism and regeneration in Israel. More than any other institution has it moulded Jewish family life with its virtues of chastity, charity, love, peace; virtues nowhere surpassed, rarely equalled. Amid all the misery and slavery that for so many centuries were the lot of Israel, once a week the home of the humblest Jew was flooded with light. The Sabbath banished care and toil, grief and sorrow. On that day, the despised and rejected of men was emancipated from the oppression and tribulation and degradation of this world; he felt himself a prince, a member of a great, eternal, holy people. A German Protestant theologian of anti-Semitic tendencies writes:<sup>10</sup>

‘Any one who has had the opportunity of knowing in our own day the inner life of Jewish families that observe the Law of the fathers with sincere piety and in all strictness, will have been astonished at the wealth of joyfulness, gratitude and sunshine, undreamt of by the outsider, which the Law animates in the Jewish home. The whole household rejoices on the Sabbath, which they celebrate with rare satisfaction not only as the day of rest, but rather as the day of rejoicing. Jewish prayers term the Sabbath a “joy of the soul” to him who hallows it; *he* “enjoys the abundance of Thy goodness”. Such expressions are not mere words; they are the outcome of pure and genuine happiness and enthusiasm.’

But the Sabbath could never have become what it was, is, and will be, in the life of the loyal Jew, were it not for those very rabbinic Sabbath laws with their infinite minutiae which unsympathetic critics decry as so much

<sup>10</sup> R. Kittel, *The Religion of the People of Israel*, p. 193.

intolerable formalism.<sup>11</sup> *These restrictions justify themselves in that the Jew who actually and strictly obeys these injunctions, and only such a Jew, has a day of rest.*<sup>12</sup>

We have been told that Moses was a great artist. Like the Egyptians, he too built obelisks and pyramids ; but they were human obelisks and human pyramids. He took a poor shepherd family and, under Providence, turned it into a nation destined to outlast millennia.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> J. Klausner, השלח, xxxviii. 38.

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Loewe, *The Orthodox Position*, Cambridge, 1915, pp. 17 and 18, writes :

‘Possibly the most misunderstood of all our ordinances are those which regulate carrying and travelling on Sabbath. Sabbath is the home festival, it is the strength and glorification of home life, home worship, and home rest. Theatre-going, golfing, cycling, harmless and even desirable though they be, are alien to the Sabbath spirit. The moment that riding is tolerated, the whole Sabbath spirit is changed ; it becomes something absolutely different. It is quite impossible to draw a line and say, “I will permit this violation, but observe that : thus far, but no further.” Practical experience has shown the instability and the futility of such distinctions. Jewish life rests on refraining from riding. Whoever begins by riding will end by losing the Sabbath altogether.

‘It is sometimes said, “I live too far away from the synagogue to walk there on Sabbath, therefore I must either ride or not attend.” No commandment may be fulfilled by the breach of a prohibition מצות הבאה בעבירה. One of the consequences of the prohibition is that Jews tend to live near a place of worship, near a religious school, near a *Kosher* butcher, and among their co-religionists. Jews who do not associate exclusively in non-Jewish society, are saved from the danger of their children intermarrying with non-Jewish friends. The simple prohibition of riding on Sabbath thus gives him security, and safeguards the whole basis of Jewish life.’

Mr. Loewe’s *The Orthodox Position* was planned as the first of a series of papers under the general title ‘Problems in Jewish Orthodoxy’.

<sup>13</sup> Heine in *Confessions*.

The Hebrew poet Byalik has bestowed as high praise upon the men who continued and perpetuated the work of Moses, the Rabbis. Cathedrals like that of Milan or York, he maintains, did not arise overnight. First there was the vision of a sacred edifice of marvellous beauty and harmony in stone and colour. Generations of worshippers made the realization of that vision possible by unbounded sacrifice of material treasure; and generations of builders toiled lovingly, faithfully, and unremittingly, by hammer and chisel, by sculptor's mallet and painter's brush, and at length gave bodily form to that glorious vision. Israel, too, has had its cathedral builders, says Byalik, though these toiled neither in stone nor marble. Israel's builders were architects of life; and their cathedrals, cathedrals of the spirit. Before the soul of the Rabbis there rose the vision of a Sabbath Day as a day of rest and joy, of pleasure and delight, a day in which a man enjoys some presentiment of the pure bliss and happiness which are stored up for the righteous in the world to come. And these same men were also the builders of that Sabbath Day in the life of the people. By means of the rabbinic expansion of the kinds of forbidden work on the Sacred Day, and as the outcome of the gigantic intellectual labour on the part of generations, nay centuries, of Sopherim, Tannaim, and Amoraim in the elucidation of these laws, there arose the choicest spiritual edifice in the realm of Judaism—the Sabbath Day of Jewish history.<sup>14</sup> Without the observance of the Sabbath, of the olden Sabbath, of the Sabbath as perfected by the Rabbis, the whole of Jewish life would disappear—the

<sup>14</sup> Byalik, *ואגדה הלכה* in *Collected Works*, ii. 244.

home and the synagogue, the Festivals and the sacred language of the Jew. And only if the olden Sabbath will be maintained by those who observe it, and will be restored to those who have lost or abandoned it, is the permanence of Israel assured.<sup>15</sup>

‘But’, I will be told, ‘all these commands and repressions of the old Judaism concerning Sabbath, ritual, food, are not in line with modern thought. We are waiting for a re-interpretation of Jewish tradition “in accordance with the times” ; a Judaism clinging merely to the religious idea behind the ceremonies, and, for the rest, trusting the Jewish spirit.’

~~Our answer is that~~ mankind does not live in a world of ideas only. Men and women as we know them cannot dispense with symbols that give tangibility to ideas, at least the Jew cannot. He either says his morning prayers in *Tefillin* or he does not say them at all. The war against forms and symbols which is preached with such crusading zeal in Liberal Jewish circles in the name of the Jewish spirit, is itself a revolt against that Jewish spirit. The late Dr. Israel Abrahams, who

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Cyrus Adler says :

‘Every Jew who has it within his power, should aid in the effort to restore the Sabbath to the man to whom it has been taken away. Failure on the part of any in this regard can never be atoned for by any other acts of charity or good-heartedness. No deeds of charity or philanthropy, no sacrifices of time or fortune made by any Jew, at all equals in beneficent result the expenditure of time and money looking towards the re-establishment of the Jewish Sabbath among the Jewish people. It is a poor philanthropy that crushes the virtues of a man by depriving him of his religion and offers him in exchange a Settlement house or a lyceum course. No amount of prating about morals will ever take the place of rooted habits ruthlessly plucked out.’



certainly cannot be suspected of hostility to Liberal Judaism, tells us that much of the Jewish system of observance, a system which filled and hallowed the Jew's life, is passing away; and he significantly adds: 'This is largely because Jews are surrendering their own original theory of life and religion.'<sup>16</sup> While this is undeniably true of Liberal Jews, we, who are not Liberal Jews, refuse to surrender our own original theory of life and religion, and will continue to sanctify our lives and the lives of our children by the Divine observances of our sacred Faith. The cry that Orthodox Judaism does not trust the Jewish spirit to survive without observance, leaves us cold. It is an echo of Paul and the early Jewish Christians, of Sabbethai Zevi and Jacob Frank, of Joseph Krauskopf and Emil Hirsch. Hellenistic Jewry in ancient Alexandria experimented with 'clinging merely to the idea behind the ceremonies'. The letter of the Law was considered as a mere husk, and the whole of the Scripture-narrative was looked upon as only a didactic poem. The result was death. It ended in total apostasy from Judaism. Again, the demand for a re-interpretation of Traditional Judaism that shall in all things be in line with modern thought and life,<sup>17</sup> assumes that there exists a consistent

<sup>16</sup> *Judaism* (Religions: Ancient and Modern), p. 65.

<sup>17</sup> Many expect such a re-interpretation of Judaism from these sermons. They would have me remove 'the rough edges' of Judaism; that is, explain away most of the positive and negative requirements of Judaism as unnecessary and unimportant, and present a Judaism of such 'broadness' and elasticity that it does not oppose itself to anything in particular—not even to treason and heresy in our own camp. A generation ago, a noted rabbi illustrated whither this desire for smoothening out the 'rough

body of ideals which can be called Modern life, and that it is an advantage to Judaism, or, for that matter, to religion in general, in no way to differ or dissent from this body of thought.<sup>18</sup> But surely we must not naïvely overlook all the 'conventional lies of our civilization'; nor forget that modern life tends to the destruction of the family, the cheapening of human life, and the loss of all belief in absolute values, be they of religion or of morality. Whenever I am asked for a Judaism that is 'in accordance with the times', two great utterances come to my mind. One of them is Zunz's rebuke to Abraham Geiger: 'Uns müssen wir reformieren, nicht die Religion (Let us reform ourselves, not Judaism).'<sup>19</sup> And the other is the reply of Samson Raphael Hirsch to this same demand:<sup>20</sup>

'Was Judaism ever "in accordance with the times"?

Did Judaism ever correspond with the views of edges' of Judaism would lead. Immemorial tradition prescribes that the *Daled* in the word אלה in the Shema be written large, so that the sharp angle of the *Daled* should come out unmistakably. It is one of the 'rough edges' of Judaism. Smoothen that rough edge, and the *Daled* becomes a *Resh*; and אלה one God, now reads אלה a *strange* God, an idol.

But 'Can Traditional Judaism be lived by modern men and women?' This question is analogous with that other anti-Semitic and virulently insulting query, 'Can Jews be Patriots?' In either case it is hopeless to convince the maligners of Jews and Judaism by pointing to the thousands of Jews who have died for their country, and the tens of thousands of 'modern' Jews who now live the Jewish life.

<sup>18</sup> B. B. Lieberman in *Report of Second Conference of Anglo-Jewish Preachers*, 1925, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v. 184.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 218.

dominant contemporaries? Was it ever convenient to be a Jew or a Jewess?

'Was the Judaism of our ancestors in accordance with the times, when compelled by the Egyptians to bend their necks during centuries under the yoke of slavery and to suffer their babes to be buried in the waves of the Nile? Was the Judaism of the Maccabees in accordance with their times, when they resisted to the utmost the introduction of Grecian manners prevailing in their days? When the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans and the sons of Judah were slaughtered, sold in slave markets, cast before wild beasts or scattered through every country then known; when worldly wisdom would have taught, "Now it is certainly impossible for us to remain Jews"—did not the Hillels and the son of Zakkai teach yet more earnestly the holiness of our laws and our customs, and so order and regulate things that not a fibre might be lost from the ancestral sanctuary? Was that Judaism in accordance with the times, for which, during the centuries following the Dispersion, our fathers suffered in all lands, through all various periods, the most degrading oppression, the most biting contempt, and a thousandfold death and persecution?

'And yet *we* would make it the aim and scope of Judaism to be always "in accordance with the times"!'

After these words of the greatest Jewish scholar, and of the most ardent defender of Traditional Judaism in the nineteenth century, we will conclude with a thought of Rabbi Simlai that cannot be too often repeated.<sup>21</sup> Rabbi Simlai was an original defender of his Faith and People in the controversies with Jewish Christians and other heretics of the third century. Six hundred and thirteen—he said—is the number of the commandments of the Torah. David, in the 15th Psalm, reduced them to eleven ethical principles; and after him, Isaiah, to six.

<sup>21</sup> Talm. Maccoth 23b.

The prophet Micah condensed them to three—Justice, Mercy, Humility—אֱמֶת ד' דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי אֵם־הַגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם מָה טוֹב וְמָה ד' דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי אֵם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהִצְנַע לִבָּךְ עִם אֱלֹהֶיךָ.

‘He hath shown thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee: Only to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.’

At last, Habakkuk came and expressed them in one comprehensive statement: וְצִדִּיק בְּאֱמוּנָתוֹ יֵחִי־הָ ‘The righteous liveth by his אֱמוּנָה’; which word is usually translated faith, but really means *steadfastness*. Steadfastness is the divine aim and goal of both the Written and Oral Law, of the Sabbath and of all the 613 precepts of the Jewish life—steadfastness to God on the part of men and women with an unconditional resolve to be and to remain Jews; loyal and steadfast and faithful Jews, and, therefore, sanctifying their lives through free and loving submission to God’s holy and unchanging Torah. Amen.



V

THE HOLINESS OF HOME

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Lech Lecho 5687,  
16 October 1926, at the Brondesbury  
Synagogue, London.*

WE shall never get to the heart of Judaism as a rule of life, nor begin to understand its distinctive individuality as a religious civilization, unless and until we have grasped the great Jewish ethical principle of the Holiness of Home.

There are various pre-suppositions in the Jewish ethos which alone render that Holiness of Home possible. Only three of these presuppositions can we briefly explain to-day. These are, the centrality of the child in Judaism, the unchanging sacredness of parental and filial affection in Israel, and the place of woman in Jewish life.

I

To begin with the centrality of the child in Judaism. Among the most enlightened nations of antiquity the child had no rights, no protection, no dignity of any sort. In Greece, weak children were generally *exposed*, that is, abandoned on a lonely mountain to perish; and public opinion demanded that deformed children be drowned or otherwise put out of the way. In Roman times, a man could at will put even a grown-up son to death. The respect which Jews showed for infant life and their horror at any form of child-murder were

noted as a contemptible prejudice of a perverse people. The Roman historian Tacitus, in describing the population of Judaea, says:<sup>1</sup>

‘All their customs owe their strength to their very badness. . . . The Jews do not allow any images of the Deity to stand in their Temples . . . and it is a crime among them to kill any child (*necare quemquam ex agnatis nefas putant*).’

Only six Latin words ; yet what a lurid flashlight do they throw on Graeco-Roman society ! It is in such a society that the Rabbis proclaimed the Biblical view that the child was the highest of human treasures. In to-day’s *Sedrah* we read Abraham’s agonizing cry :<sup>2</sup> ‘O Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing that I go childless ?’ ד'. אלהים מה תתן לי ואני חולך ערירי. This attitude of the Father of the Hebrew people towards the child has remained the attitude of his descendants to this day. Let me point but to one circumstance. Jewish infant mortality is everywhere lower than the non-Jewish infant mortality—often it is only one-half of that among the general population ! The Rabbis declared little children to be the Messiahs of mankind.<sup>3</sup> אל תגעו במשיחי—אלו חינוקות של בית רבן. That is, in the child God gives humanity a chance to make good its mistakes. The child is thus the perennial regenerative force in humanity.

It is only during the last century that the world at large learned this Jewish truth ; that Wordsworth and Victor Hugo, Swinburne and Christina Rossetti discovered that ‘Heaven lies about us in our infancy’.

<sup>1</sup> *Histories*, v. 5. Instead of *agnatis*, some authorities read *natis*.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xv. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Talm. Sabbath 119b.

But ever so long before poets made this new view of childhood fashionable, ages before Science vindicated the part played by the prolonged helplessness of the human infant in the humanization of man,<sup>4</sup> thousands of years before the new humanitarianism made the child the focus of all spiritual and social endeavour, Judaism redeemed it from slavery and death. But Judaism did infinitely more, it consecrated the child. One legend that has sunk deep into the Jewish consciousness will illustrate this. Simlai, the philosopher-rabbi of the Talmud, tells that each unborn babe, before it knocks on the gateway of life, has an angel as its tutor.<sup>5</sup> It is taught the whole Torah, and made familiar with all the truths and mysteries of Life and Eternity. It is solemnly adjured to follow the right on its earthly pilgrimage, and shun the evil; and that even if all the world were to combine and acclaim it righteous, the soul is to bear in mind that it never can attain to the sinlessness

<sup>4</sup> Science accelerated the swing of the pendulum towards a humane view of childhood. Scientists pointed out that the newborn beast had instinct, strength, and self-help. Not so the newborn child. 'Like a mariner cast ashore by the angry waves it lies prostrate on the earth, naked, helpless, destitute of all the aids to existence—and fills the place it has entered with dismal wailings' (Lucretius). And for such a long time does the human infant remain absolutely dependent on his parents, that years before he reaches manhood his brute contemporaries will have had their day and died. The prolonged helplessness of the human infant, scientists maintain, by keeping the parents together for longer and longer periods in successive epochs, is responsible for the rise of the family, and has thus been the mightiest of levers in the humanization of man. Cf. A. F. Chamberlain, *The Child* (Contemporary Science Series), pp. 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Talm. Niddah 30b.



of its Heavenly home. At the moment of birth, however, with one stroke, all is forgotten—the teaching, the oath, and the admonition—and naught but an impulse towards the right, a dim reminiscence of the one true way, remains throughout life. You may dismiss all this as a bit of folk-lore, nay, as superstition, if you will. Yet the effect of such a legend was a marvellous enhancement in the Jewish mind of veneration for the new-born child, which but a little while ago, it was firmly believed, held converse with Heavenly beings.<sup>6</sup> It necessarily led to lifelong efforts to bring out the dormant teaching Divinely planted in the child's soul. Education came to be regarded as the most sacred of human activities; the school house as a second Mount Sinai; and the day on which the child entered it as the Festival of Revelation.<sup>7</sup>

## II

The second presupposition of the Jewish ideal of the Holiness of Home is the unchanging sacredness of parental and filial affection in Israel. Jewish history begins with the family, with the *שלושה אבות וארבע אמהות*, the three Patriarchs and the four Mothers of the Jewish People. No less than thirty-eight of the fifty chapters

<sup>6</sup> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;  
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
 And cometh from afar;  
 Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God, who is our home. (Wordsworth.)

<sup>7</sup> See 'The Child in Jewish Literature', in Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, i. 282-312.

of the Book of Genesis deal exclusively with family history. Judaism enrols filial respect towards father and mother among its ten holiest Commandments;<sup>8</sup> and maintains the absolute and *unchanging* character of this fundamental human duty.

This has not always been the case outside Israel, whether in ancient, medieval, or modern times. In the Middle Ages, for example, there were occasions when the love of children for parents was branded by the Church as deep sin. It is difficult to-day to conceive the discredit that was thrown upon the domestic virtues in the times of the Christian ascetics. One or two detailed instances must be adduced. Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*,<sup>9</sup> repeats the story of a certain young boy who had enrolled himself as a monk. He had taken the vow to forsake his father and mother and withdraw from the world, but was unable to repress his love for his parents. One night he stole out secretly to visit them. But—the Church chronicle records—the judgment of God soon marked the enormity of the offence. On coming back to the monastery, he died that very day; and when he was buried, the earth refused to receive so heinous a criminal. His body was repeatedly thrown up from the grave!

In the same way, a father's and a mother's love towards their children was for centuries looked upon as something which it was right for God's truest and

<sup>8</sup> These duties, the Rabbis held, were incumbent upon all mankind. It is characteristic of their broad humanity that when they wished to give a perfect example of filial piety they selected the action of a contemporary heathen in Ascalon. Talm. Kiddushin 31a.

<sup>9</sup> Vol. ii. 135.

holiest worshippers to eradicate from their breasts. The *Lives of the Saints* tell of a man named Mutius who had abandoned his possessions and, accompanied by his only child, a little boy eight years old, demanded admission into a monastery. The monks received him. The little boy, however, was subjected by them to every form of gross and wanton hardship and ill-treatment. Day after day the father saw his child wasting away; 'but yet', says the admiring monastic biographer, 'he thought little of the tears of his child. He was anxious only for his own humility and perfection in virtue'. At last, the abbot of the monastery told him to take the little boy and throw him into the river. He proceeded, without a murmur or apparent pang, to obey; and it was only at the very brink of the water, that the monks interposed and saved the child. Mutius afterwards rose to a high position among the ascetics, and was regarded as having displayed in great perfection the temper of a saint.<sup>10</sup>

These pathetic aberrations of the human spirit are not confined to the piety of the early medieval ages as recorded in the annals of monasticism. They are not unknown in our own days of militarism and super-patriotism. A generation ago, the ex-Kaiser reminded his soldiers that, at his command, it would be their duty to shoot down their own fathers and mothers. During the War, British mothers gloried in the suppression of their maternal instincts. One mother whose two sons were killed in the War, learnt of her second bereavement just as she had risen to preside at a meeting. She

<sup>10</sup> Cassian, *De Coenobiorum Institutis*, iv. 27, quoted in Lecky, *History of European Morals*, ii. 125.

glanced at the telegram bringing the tragic news and was compelled to sit down again. After a moment she rose and said: 'I hope you will excuse me for having sat down. The news I had by telegram was that my second and last son had been killed. We will now proceed with the business of the meeting.'<sup>11</sup> To many people this action seems worthy of the mother of Coriolanus. How many Jewish mothers, we are asked, would be capable of such rigid self-control? Our answer is, that to a normal mind such conduct, and the commendation it evokes, must appear as merely a return to heathen and medieval heartlessness. When, furthermore, we consider that defiance of parental authority is declared to be the first step of moral emancipation by political Bolshevism; when we call to mind that leaders of Jewish religious Bolshevism<sup>12</sup> have longed for a class-war between parents and children, and speak of the 'irrepressible conflict' between fathers and sons, it is clear that Israel must still bear witness to the absolute and unchanging sacredness of parental and filial affection.

### III

One other presupposition of the Holiness of the Home we will consider—the place of woman in Jewish

<sup>11</sup> See 'Gaza', in *Jewish World*, 5 August 1926.

<sup>12</sup> On the call for a spiritual 'class-war', see the address of the Hon. Lily Montagu, *Jewish Chronicle*, 17 January 1919, and the protests against it by the late Rev. Gerald Friedlander and myself, 24 January to 7 March. That apostle of Liberal Judaism, the late Dr. Krauskopf, objected to the wording of the Fifth Commandment. 'It is parents', he said, 'and not children that require admonition in that direction.' He therefore proposed that the Fifth Commandment should be amended to read: 'Honour thy son and thy daughter!'

life. Woman, we read on the very first pages of the Torah, is the helpmate of man, עזר כנגדו. Monogamy is the ideal, nay, the rule—polygamy the exception. 'A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife,'<sup>13</sup> says Scripture; not to his *wives*. Note further that it is man who is to cleave to his wife and not the woman, who is physically the weaker, that is to cleave to her husband; because in the higher sphere of the soul's life, woman is ethically and spiritually superior to man.<sup>14</sup> Even as the wife is—say the Rabbis—so the husband is. הכבול מן האשה.<sup>15</sup> Such conceptions form the basis for that exceptional position which woman attained in Israel. Neither in Rome nor in Greece was there a Miriam, a Deborah, or a Huldah.

In Talmudic times, there is an ever-growing respect of and reverence for womanhood. The husband is bidden to love his wife as himself, and honour her more than himself. 'Be careful not to cause woman to weep,' is the admonition of the Sages, 'for God counts her tears. He who weds a good woman, it is as if he had fulfilled all the precepts of the Torah.' The Rabbis showed a fine appreciation of woman's religious steadfastness and loyalty. Israel—they declare—was redeemed from Egypt on account of the virtue of its women. בזכות נשים צדקניות שהיו באותו הדור נגאלו ישראל ממצרים. And, similarly, Rabbi Joseph Jabez, the moralist preacher who witnessed the expulsion from Spain, nearly 3,000 years later, relates that the women encouraged their despondent

<sup>13</sup> Genesis ii. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Genesis ii. 24. Cf. Max Landsberg, in *Judaism at the [Chicago] World's Parliament of Religions*, p. 243.

<sup>15</sup> Midrash Bereshith Rabba, xvii. 7.

husbands rather to suffer the agonies of death on the pyres of the Inquisition than to deny the Faith of their fathers.

All this notwithstanding, it is asked, are there not grave disabilities of woman in the rabbinic scheme? Thus, do we not find in the Orthodox Prayer Book a special prayer, *שלא עשני אשה*, 'Blessed art Thou Who hast not made me a woman?' But the explicit reason which Rabbi Yehudah ben Ilai, the author of this benediction, gives for proposing it, proves that the words in question have nothing to do with any male pride. Rabbi Yehudah says, A man shall praise God that he is born a man and not a woman *שאין אשה חייבת במצוות* 'because woman is freed from the obligations of many of the Commandments'.<sup>16</sup> That is, many of the ceremonial duties were not incumbent upon women; and the man, so far from resenting his additional burden, thanked God for it.<sup>17</sup>

In such a matter as a nation's estimate of its

<sup>16</sup> Tosephta Berachoth, vii. 18 (ed. Zuckermendl).

<sup>17</sup> This is the explanation of Dr. Israel Abrahams, in his *Annotations to the Authorized Prayer Book*, p. xvi, and cannot, therefore, be suspected as partial to Orthodoxy. James Darmesteter has shown that the ancient Persians had a similar formula in which the worshipper expressed gratitude that he was a man and not one of the lower animals, a man and not a woman, an Iranian and not an idolater (Professor Kaufmann in *Monatschrift*, xxxvii. 18).

In view of the misunderstandings to which this and its accompanying Blessings constantly give rise, the late Professor A. Berliner (*Randbemerkungen zum Siddur*, i. 15 and ii. 33-7) strongly urges that they be replaced by one positive benediction, *שעשני ישראל* 'Who hast made me an Israelite'. This view may be said to be favoured by the Gaon of Wilna, on the basis of the *Rosh* and the *Tur*.

womanhood, however, little can be proved by quotations that might be neutralized by counter-quotations. The decisive thing is that the respect and reverence which womanhood enjoyed in Judaism are not limited to noble and beautiful sayings. That respect and reverence were translated into life. It is true that neither minnesingers nor troubadours sang for Jewish women; and that the immemorial chastity of the Jewess could not well go with courts of love and chivalric tournaments. And yet, one test alone is sufficient to show the abyss, in actual life, between Jewish and non-Jewish chivalry during the thousand years of ruffianism which we call the Dark and the Middle Ages. That test is *wife-beating*. Rabbenu Tam, the renowned grandson of Rashi, could declare: 'This is a thing not done in Israel.'<sup>18</sup> Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg, the illustrious jurist, poet, martyr, and leader of thirteenth-century Judaism, writes: *אין זה דרך בני עמינו להכות נשותיהם כמנהג אומות העולם*. 'Jews are not addicted to the *minhag* of beating their wives which is prevalent among the Gentiles.'<sup>19</sup> And as for our own country, the foremost living English historian, George Macaulay Trevelyan, in his recent survey of the history of England, says that as late as the fifteenth century,

'Chivalry was in England, as elsewhere, compatible with brutal violence and calculating materialism, not least in the treatment of women. Wife-beating was a recognized right of man, and was practised without shame by high as well as low.'<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, pp. 88-90.

<sup>19</sup> *Responsa*, ed. Cremona, no. 291.

<sup>20</sup> *History of England*, 1926, pp. 260-1. He continues:

'Similarly the daughter who refused to marry the gentleman

There were other things even worse than wife-beating; such as the public sale of wives, which survived as a folk-custom well into the nineteenth century. Thomas Hardy founded his powerful novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, on such a sale.<sup>21</sup> But enough. Sufficient has been said to indicate that even in the darkest ages Jewish women enjoyed a freedom, respect, and reverence surpassed among no other people.

#### IV

Little need, in conclusion, be said of the Holiness of Home itself. This holiness is rooted in religion, and it springs from the association of certain times and seasons in the Jewish home with ceremonial customs regarded as sacred. The late Dr. Joseph Jacobs says:

‘It is impossible to describe to those who have not experienced it, the feeling of holy joy which is diffused throughout the humblest Hebrew home by the solemn repetition of acts which in themselves may be regarded

of her parents’ choice was liable to be locked up, beaten and flung about the room, without any shock being inflicted on public opinion. Marriage was not an affair of personal affection but of family avarice, particularly in the “chivalrous” upper classes.’

<sup>21</sup> ‘It may seem strange to sophisticated minds that a sane young matron could believe in the seriousness of such a transfer; and were there not numerous instances of the same belief, as too many rural records show, the thing might scarcely be credited’ (Thomas Hardy). ‘Casterbridge’ in Dorchester.

*The Times*, January 17, 1924, quotes the following item from the *Essex Chronicle* of January 2, 1824: ‘On Saturday last, a poor but honest and hard-working labourer brought to the market-house of Ongar, encircled with a halter, his wife . . . and exposed her for public sale. She was purchased for 10s., which sum, with the market-toll [for all livestock sold therein] he immediately paid.’ Further instances are given in *The Times* of January 4, 8, 11, and 21, 1924.



as mere customs, without vital connexion with the souls of men. Man is made man by history. The Jew recognizes that he is made what he is by the history of his fathers. Many of the customary ceremonies which make up the holiness of the Jewish home are purely history raised into religion.' <sup>22</sup>

And not only is the Jewish home rooted in religious observance, <sup>23</sup> religious observance can alone save it from disintegration and disappearance. Whenever we think of the Jewish home and its marvellous preservation throughout the millennia, we think of it as a little Holland, wrested from the waters of materialism, paganism, and animalism ; and safeguarded against their deadly onslaught by certain dikes, spiritual dikes, constructed under Divine guidance by Israel's inspired

<sup>22</sup> *Jewish Ideals*, pp. 12, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Olive Schreiner, in *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, p. 177 : ' Some years ago, when I was living in Europe, I went for six months to reside in the very poorest part of the East End of London, where I made friends with a poor Jewish woman. She took me into the tiny one-roomed tenement where she and her husband and their children lived on a few shillings a week they earned by their joint labour. Though it had all the misery and confinement which extreme poverty means in a great city, I had yet often a curious feeling that it was a *home*. With, however, much difficulty a few pence would be saved to celebrate, if it were but in a pitiful little way, the festivals of their people ; though it were by starving themselves, the parents would lay by something for the education of their children or to procure them some little extra comfort. And the conclusion was forced on me that, taking the very poorest class of Jews and comparing him with an exactly analogous class of non-Jews earning the same wages and living in the same locality, the life of the Jew was, on the whole, more mentally healthful, more human, and had in it an element of hope that was often wanting in that of others. I felt that these people needed but a little space, a little chance, to develop into some far higher form.'

engineers in the days of old. I would mention but a few of these dikes—*Kashrus*, and the moral discipline of the Jewish home; *Kiddush*, and home-religion; and *Kaddish*, and all those beautiful symbols that sanctify birth and death, and link the generations in filial piety. If, whether through folly or disloyalty, any home or community levels these dikes, it is only a question of years before the waters of assimilation sweep over that home or that community, and it is no longer reckoned among the homes or communities of Israel. In a word, without home-religion there is neither religion nor a true Jewish home for the Jew. 'Except the Lord build the home, they toil in vain that build it.'<sup>24</sup> אם ד' לא יבנה בית שוא עמלו בוניו בו

The Jewish home of old was a model of purity and sanctity. It compelled the admiration of a hostile world at a time when our enemies loathed our very name as if Israel were some toad, ugly and venomous. The beauty of Israel's home-life forced them reluctantly to admit that:

The toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel on its head.

The great problem for modern Israel is to guard that precious jewel of infinite beauty and imperishable worth—the holiness of the Jewish home. It is ours to resist all endeavours, even when these are made by born Jews, to tear that jewel from the forehead of Israel. It is our most sacred task to keep that jewel bright and brilliant, so that it continue to illumine the soul of Israel; yea, that it help kindle the same holy light in the soul of all humanity. Amen.

<sup>24</sup> Psalm cxxvii. 1.



## VI

### JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ITS FOUNDATION AND AIM

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Chanukah 5687, 4 December,  
1926, at the Stoke Newington Synagogue, London.*

ראשית חכמה יראת ד'

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom.*—Psalm cxi. 10.

תכלית חכמה תשובה ומעשים טובים

*The goal of wisdom is repentance and good deeds.*—Talm.  
Berachoth 17a.

In the past, the Jew conceived of religious education as the most sacred of human activities;<sup>1</sup> and in the present, it is certainly for him the most vital. Within a

<sup>1</sup> Authorized Prayer Book, p. 5:

'These are the things, the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world, while the stock remains for him for the world to come: viz. honouring father and mother, the practice of charity, timely attendance at the house of study morning and evening, hospitality to wayfarers, visiting the sick, dowering the bride, attending the dead to the grave, devotion in prayer, and making peace between man and his fellow; but the study of the Torah is equal to them all.'—Mishnah, Peah I.

'The study of the Torah outweighs all the ethical precepts here enumerated', explains Prof. Hermann Cohen, the leader of the Neo-Kantian movement in philosophy, 'because the Torah is itself the sum and concept of all ethical law. The duty of religious education is emphasized in the Shema ("and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children"), and is thereby placed on the same plane as the proclamation of the Unity of God and the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might" '—*Jüdische Schriften*, ii. 102-3.

few years our youth will be men and women ; if, in their case, the battle for Judaism is lost during their school life, what hope have we to keep them within the ranks of Israel, loyal and true, in the days to come ? The religious factor in education is the strongest of all motives that make for moral strength, self-control, character. The weal or woe of our children thus depends upon the religious equipment with which they start on the journey of life. It is, therefore, the duty of every Jewish father and mother to understand at least the *foundation* of Jewish religious education, as well as the *aim* towards which we are to train our children in the way they should go.

One brief verse of the Psalmist, restated in various forms by the Biblical sages, wonderfully expresses the foundation of Jewish education : ' ראשית חכמה יראת ד' ' The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' All the wisdom of man, Judaism maintains, is sheer and utter vanity unless it is conditioned by ' the fear of the Lord ' ; unless it is accompanied by reverent submission of the will in the service of higher things. In the story of Chanukah, Judaism has for all time furnished types of heroic and saintly men and women who remained undazzled even by Hellenic wisdom—brilliant, seductive, powerful though it was—because that wisdom was not based on reverence, purity, and pity ; in other words, because it was not based on the fear of the Lord. These Maccabean warriors and martyrs saw the appalling degradation of God-less wisdom ; and this clear realization of its consequences girded their arm with might to beat back the heathen forces that threatened—as we now clearly see—to involve all mankind in a common

demoralization. It is the spiritual descendants of these Maccabees who have throughout the ages regarded the schoolhouse where the Jewish child learned the fear of the Lord as a Mount Sinai; and the day on which the child entered it as a *Shavuons*, the Festival of Revelation, when the Ten Commandments are, as it were, once more proclaimed for him. No wonder, therefore, that the Jewish child was taught to look upon life as a discipline demanding unconditional obedience to Divine Thou shalt's and Thou shalt not's, and involving a constant sacrifice of selfish inclinations for the sake of principle.<sup>2</sup>

In such discipline lies the road of educational salvation out of the moral chaos in our own age, when the pilot's stars of moral guidance seem no longer to be fixed stars, and when for so many voyagers over the ocean of life the clouded heavens offer no guidance at all.<sup>3</sup> Only by inculcating in the souls of the young loyal obedience to Divine laws that are absolute and unchangeable, can we hope to stem the waters of animalism and heathenism that to-day threaten the higher life of man.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Joseph Jacobs, *Jewish Ideals*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 August 1926:

'The old type of piety amongst the English-speaking peoples drew its character very largely from the Old Testament. In the present mood of the world, the idea of man subjecting himself in his personal life to a Divine law outside him or above him, has become repugnant to large numbers of men and women. To those who think straight, it must be plain that to deprive Christianity of the elements which it carried on from the Old Testament tradition, would be to leave nothing which could be called Christianity at all.'

<sup>4</sup> The steadily-increasing crime wave in America recently induced the New York Board of Education to consider a departure

And this is the view not merely of professional theologians or cloistered scholars. Listen to the words of two representative men of the age. One of them is a statesman and thinker, the late Prime Minister of Great Britain :<sup>5</sup>

‘The first problem of statesmanship is not international, neither is it national; it is personal. Being a plaything of passion, of the superficial, of the flashing allurements of life, might look all very well; but in the end it is nothing. The life which is a success is a life of discipline and steady purpose, of obedience to higher things. Our youth of to-day, perhaps more than ever on account of the misery that we have been reaping now for the sowing of a few years ago, requires a discipline which is more severe, more drastic, more hardening in spiritual things than has been called for by any generation in the last century.’

The other is an illustrious Jewish scientist, Professor Haffkine, of the Pasteur Institute, Paris :<sup>6</sup>

‘Youth owes deference to the wisdom of the forefathers. The stores of observation and thought accumulated by far-sighted elders which are essential for guarding the destinies of a nation, are not perceivable to the young. It is fortunate when trust and affection are there to supplement and assist reason. The success of the British nation has been in a con-

from the American principle of absolute separation of Church and State in education, and to discuss at a public hearing the proposal to read the Ten Commandments in the schools. The proposal met with strong opposition at the hands of Freethinkers and Liberals. A leading Liberal rabbi declared: ‘You won’t put an end to crime by teaching little children the Ten Commandments.’ Worthy sentiments these for a teacher and ‘rabbi’!

<sup>5</sup> J. Ramsay MacDonald, reported in *The Times*, 22 July 1926.

<sup>6</sup> ‘A Plea for Orthodoxy’, in *Menorah Journal*, April 1916. Prof. Haffkine is the renowned conqueror of the plague-germ. He was decorated in 1897 by H.M. Queen Victoria for his humanitarian services in India.

siderable measure promoted by the education given to the youth of the leading classes, who for generations were sent away from home to the great Public Schools of Eton, Harrow and others, and were trained in an attitude of deference and a habit of yielding willingly to their superiors and to their own elected captains. Jewish youths, on the other hand, are often under the impression that restraint is tyrannical and illiberal.'

These two opinions form an illuminating present-day commentary on the Scriptural words: *טוב לנער כי ישא עליו* <sup>7</sup> 'It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth'; and a vindication of the basic principle of Jewish education, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom'.

If the fear of the Lord is the foundation of Jewish religious education, what is its purpose, goal, and *aim*? So important do I deem a proper understanding of such aim that I do not hesitate to repeat, and further elucidate, some of the things which I may have said on this theme on other occasions. In England, one often hears the statement—the aim of education is not knowledge but character. This is not as helpful as it sounds.<sup>8</sup> For one thing, 'character' is a neutral term, like 'ambition'. There are noble and ignoble characters, just as there are noble and ignoble ambitions. And, as a

<sup>7</sup> Lamentations iii. 27.

<sup>8</sup> Sometimes it is a mere echo of the contempt in which learning is still held in some aristocratic circles as a middle-class accomplishment. It is also the slogan of those who for some reason hate scholarship as something 'foreign'. In this they are absolutely unjust to English educational institutions. The ideal of learning in English schools and universities is as austere and free from quackery, and their examinations are as searching, as those of any academic bodies in the world.



matter of fact, many would have education aim at producing 'the strong man', the superman, who rides rough-shod over all obstacles to victory and success. Others consider a man's possession of the team spirit—i. e. unquestioning loyalty to his party or group, no matter how unethical the manifestations of that loyalty may often be—as the unfailing characteristic of the English gentleman, and therefore as the highest form of culture. And neither the unscrupulous superman nor the blind partisan can well be called noble characters.<sup>9</sup>

Of deep significance, therefore, is the light thrown on this root-question of religious education by the very name for education in our sacred language. In Hebrew, education is *Chinnuch*. The word comes from the same root as Chanukah, and, like it, means consecration. Language, it has been well said,<sup>10</sup> is a hieroglyphic that will be found to reveal the history, the world-view, nay, the very soul, of a people; and that

<sup>9</sup> For the idea of the perfect gentleman, Jews need go no further than Psalm xv (or, for that matter, Micah vi. 8, as the learned Principal of Jews' College showed in his masterly address at the last Speech Day, reprinted in *Jewish Chronicle Supplement*, June, 1926).

Dean Inge (see his recent *England*, p. 56 ff.) calls the ideal type of gentleman 'the lay-religion of the English and the foundation of the ethics which they really admire and try to practise'. This lay-religion does not seem to fare much better than other religions: it is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. Cardinal Newman, who produced the best definition and description of the gentleman in our language, condemned that whole ideal as built on a wrong foundation, that of personal pride (*The Idea of a University*, pp. 208-10).

<sup>10</sup> Bondi, *אור אמת*, Dessau, 1812, p. x.

one word, *Chinnuch*, may, indeed, be said to contain the whole Jewish philosophy of education. The goal in the training of youth, it declares, is not the acquisition of skill, power, or wealth. These things may be good in their place, but they are not the primary ends either of education or of life. The primary aim of Jewish education is *the consecration of the Jewish child to Judaism, and his preparation for a life of beneficence for Israel and humanity.*

If we seek a translation of this conception in simpler and more concrete terms, we shall find it in the words of the ancient formula recited at the initiation into the Covenant of Abraham; when we pray that the infant may live to enter upon his heritage of Torah, of a Jewish home, and of human service.<sup>11</sup> כִּשְׁם שֶׁנִּכְנָס לְבְרִית כֵּן יִכְנָס  
לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים.

לתורה — Each child of Israel should start with a firm grasp of the fundamentals and elementals of his Faith — the beginnings of an educational process that is to endow him with the Jewish outlook and the Jewish consciousness. These can only be the fruits of increasing knowledge and serious study. Such study should not end with the *Barmitzvah*, but should extend throughout life. *Nicht Religionsstunden sondern Religionsjahre*, said the illustrious Leopold Zunz, the founder of the new Jewish Learning. An ignorant, Torah-less Jewry may hang on to life for a generation or two, but its end is inevitable. Torah-knowledge is the very element of Israel's existence. In the words of Rabbi Akiba, Israel can no more live on without it than

<sup>11</sup> Authorized Prayer Book, p. 305.

fish can survive out of water.<sup>12</sup> The continuation-schooling of the Jewish youth and the Jewish adult need not necessarily be carried on in formal classes. But a deep yearning and constant striving for acquaintance with Jewish thought and the classical sources of Jewish inspiration are indispensable for real, conscious, and not merely accidental, membership in the House of Israel.

לחופה—The training of every Jewish child should be such that he remain part of Israel, that he continue the work of Israel, and that he make the building of a home in Israel the ambition of his youth and manhood. Inter-marriage would then be out of the question for him. Unlike other peoples, Israel does not wage any wars, and rarely, therefore, does it call upon its children to lay down their lives in its defence ; but Judaism expects that its sons and daughters should feel themselves bound, even though the duty involve the sacrifice of precious affections, to refrain from courses of conduct that undermine the stability of Israel. 'Every Jew', says the author of *Judaism as Creed and Life*,<sup>13</sup> 'who contemplates marriage outside the pale must regard himself as paving the way to a disruption which [would] be the final, as it [would] be the culminating, disaster in the history of his people.'

And, lastly, למעשים טובים—for human service. Education is not a process that shall train us more adroitly to snatch at place and power in a world where men strive and struggle for mean prizes, where each is seeking his own profit and pleasure, and every man's hand is against

<sup>12</sup> Talm. Berachoth 61 a.

<sup>13</sup> The Rev. Morris Joseph, p. 188.

his neighbour. Quite the contrary. It emancipates us from the tyranny of these things, by the vision of some higher aim to which our whole struggle for existence is only subservient—and that noble aim is human service. It opens our eyes to look—in the homely phrase—for lame dogs to help over stiles. This the old Jew called ‘doing a *mitzvah*’. An ancient Pharaoh offered a prize for the man who should invent a new pleasure; our fathers were equally eager in their search for a new *mitzvah*, for an opportunity to show practical sympathy to any one in distress or suffering. True education causes us to see that man is made man only through society; and that the collective life of humanity itself is part of the Divine order. In the words of Rabbis: חכמת חסד חכמה חסד ומעשים טובים ‘*The goal of wisdom is repentance*’—i. e. the realization of man’s true relationship to his Father who is in Heaven; ‘*and good deeds*’—i. e. man’s duty of loving-kindness to his fellow-men.

Such is the theory of Jewish religious education, but what of the practice? Does our educational machinery endow our children with the Jewish consciousness and adequately equip them for the Jewish life and Jewish service? Alas! the paralysing fear creeps over us that in far too many cases we are losing the battle for Judaism during the school life of our growing generation. In far too many instances we find that the Jewish instruction which we give is, and in the nature of the case must largely remain, evanescent; simply because it is not part and parcel of the school curriculum of our children; because it is something foreign to their school universe; and because, in consequence, they look upon it as a burden from which other children are free.

There is one effective way of imparting Jewish religious instruction ; and that is, in the atmosphere, and as part of the curriculum, of a Jewish school ; even as Anglicans, Catholics, Wesleyans, and Unitarians train their children in their own Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan and Unitarian schools. 'Whoever believes in religion', wrote a well-known English Jew forty years ago,

'must inevitably hold that the claims of religion are paramount. It is not merely that we have to provide education for the poor of our race, but we have to provide a particular kind of education. For this purpose it is indispensable that we should have our own schools, conducted in our own way. The moment we give up these schools, we become guilty of the greatest act of neglect and wilful disobedience to our divine Law of which in the circumstances of the present day we are capable.'

Mr. Oswald John Simon, the author of the words just quoted,<sup>14</sup> rightly regarded the lax views which were even then gaining ground as to our Denominational schools, as a symptom of slackening attachment to the Covenant of our fathers.

What of our older youths, especially those attending Public Schools ? Important as is the place of Public Schools in English life, when we consider them from the point of view of our religious future, our minds are

<sup>14</sup> *Faith and Experience*, 'Denominational v. Board Schools', p. 146. In the course of the same article he states :

'The schools which the Jews provided for their own poor were in every respect among the best in the country. The sound moral training was a striking characteristic of these schools, and the secular teaching was not second in excellence to that of any school in the kingdom. There was no feature in the Jewish communal life more creditable than the excellence of their educational system.'

filled with grave misgiving.<sup>15</sup> Of the 500 young men of our wealthier classes that are being trained within their walls, only a few are members of 'Jewish Houses'. The majority either take advantage of the concession made in some, but not all, Public Schools by which nonconformists are exempt from religious instruction; or they unquestioningly attend Chapel and take the obligatory New Testament instruction. One need not be a fanatic or a reactionary to agree with one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of the last 100 years<sup>16</sup> that the result of such one-sided acquaintance with the New Testament

<sup>15</sup> The Public School is a great British institution and Jews appreciate it to the full. Perhaps too much so. Mr. Bernard Shaw says that Jews over-venerate the ideals of the nations among whom they live, and sometimes make veritable idols of those ideals. This seems to be so in regard to the Public Schools. Whereas non-Jewish leaders of British opinion have exposed their deficiencies and the flaws in the character that they train, any such criticism on the part of a Jew seems to some British Jews to be nothing short of treason to England, and proof of the 'alien' soul of the critic.

<sup>16</sup> Hermann Cohen, *Jüdische Schriften*, ii. 127-30:

The warning uttered by the illustrious Jewish philosopher was primarily directed against the exaltation of the hero of the New Testament which is current in so-called cultured Jewish circles, and is re-echoed *ad nauseam* in Liberal Jewish pulpits and writings. By this attitude of indiscriminating adulation of the Founder of Christianity, whose whole life was one of enmity and warfare against the foundations of our Faith as well as of amazing vilification of the Rabbis, we not only condemn the attitude of our forefathers towards him, but to all intents and purposes accuse them of judicial murder. '*Wir wissen nur dass der Menschenhass gegen uns seitdem Religion geworden ist.*'

I regret that space does not permit me to quote every word of the four pages constituting Prof. Cohen's weighty utterance.

and its central hero often is, that the Jewish lad comes to look upon his people as a race of deicides. And even in those modernist schools where there is no longer any deification of the Founder of Christianity, there is still idealization of him as the Perfect Man; whereas the ancient teachers of Israel—it is dinned into the ears of our youth—were a ‘brood of vipers’ and hypocrites.<sup>17</sup> In brief, the New Testament teaching which our sons receive in such schools is a golden bridge to unbaptized apostasy and Jewish anti-Semitism.

Various suggestions have recently been made with a view of bringing some Jewish influences to bear upon the Jewish youth at the Public Schools. One of these suggestions goes to the root of the evil; and that is the proposal of a Jewish Public School.<sup>18</sup> The pedagogical argument for the establishment of such a school is irresistible, and so is the moral argument. If we Jews have anything worth teaching to the world—our spiritual outlook on the universe, our distinctive social and humanitarian ethic—why withhold it from our children, why withhold it from the world? <sup>19</sup> A community which boasts of being the pioneer of spiritual religion and religious culture, cannot remain satisfied, in a field like the moral upbringing of its children, with merely *taking*

<sup>17</sup> Matthew xxiii. 13-33: ‘Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?’

<sup>18</sup> Prof. C. S. Myers, Dr. Charles Fox (Cambridge) and Rabbi Dr. Schoenfeld, together with most Jewish educational experts, are in favour of such a school.

<sup>19</sup> See Opening Address, Conference of Anglo-Jewish Preachers, 1925, pp. 16-18.

from its environment. It should also *give*; and there has been no generation in recent centuries more in need than this generation of the essential gift of the Jewish genius.<sup>20</sup> As for the dreaded dangers to the social position of British Jewry that would follow the calling into existence of a specifically Jewish School, these are as imaginary as the dangers that were supposed to come in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, or on the opening of a separate Jewish Hospital.

Seventy years ago, Samson Raphael Hirsch<sup>21</sup> by means of the efficient, and truly Jewish, elementary and secondary schools which he created in the Frankfort community, turned the current of German Jewry from assimilation and disintegration back to the life-giving fountains of fructifying faith and religious loyalty. No less striking would be the spiritual results of a Jewish Public School in Anglo-Jewry. It is a sacred task and urgent duty that confronts our community to-day—viz. to grapple with the problem of the religiously neglected children of the rich, even as for over a century and a half we have cared for the children of the poor. The time is not yet, but it is sure to come, when the great dream of a Jewish Public School worthy of the Community will be fulfilled. Its fulfilment will prove our determination to rear *all* our children for Judaism and

<sup>20</sup> See Waldo Frank, 'A Light unto the Jew', in *New Statesman*, 23 December 1925.

<sup>21</sup> For a good account of this remarkable man, see the late Dr. S. A. Hirsch's *A Book of Essays*, published by the Jewish Historical Society, pp. 167-218. S. R. Hirsch's *Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel* has been translated into English by Dr. B. Drachmann, and is published by Funk and Wagnalls.



dedicate them to a life of beneficence for Israel and humanity. וְכָל בְּנֵיךָ לְמוֹדֵי ד' וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֵיךָ 'When all thy children are taught of the Lord, great shall be the peace of thy children'.<sup>22</sup> Amen.

<sup>22</sup> Isaiah liv. 13: 'And all thy children study the Law of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children' (Dr. Gaster's translation, *Book of Prayer*, i. 82).

## VII

### JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ITS MEANING AND SCOPE

*Opening Address at the Leeds Conference of the  
Central Committee of Jewish Education*

6 July, 1924.

#### I

JEWISH religious education perennially calls for two things, *earnest consideration* and *concerted action*. Israel's kingdom is a kingdom of the spirit; and Israel's history is not a story of fire, whirlwind or earthquake, but of the still, small voice, the voice of conscience, the voice of God. Religious education alone can rear the spiritual ramparts of that kingdom, and ensure a continuity of the Jewish spirit. As long as the sound of little children repeating the Shema is heard within the walls of Jewish schools and synagogues—say the Rabbis—all the Balaams and Hamans in the world cannot prevail against Israel. And where Jewish schools are, alas, deserted and Jewish children are prevented from learning the Shema—as Jewish Balaams and Hamans have succeeded in doing in Soviet Russia—there the outlook for Israel is dark indeed.<sup>1</sup> More than to any other people or church, religious education is a question of life and death to the Congregation of Jacob.

It is therefore gratifying to note that in recent years there has been both concerted action as well as, to some

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. xxxi (1926), 'Judaism'.

extent, earnest consideration in the sphere of religious education. To begin with 'concerted action'. I have on more than one occasion paid my tribute of grateful appreciation to the splendid zeal displayed in Talmud Torah building and in Hebrew and Religion Class activity by our brethren both in the United Kingdom and in the Overseas Dominions. The Central Committee for Jewish Education is itself evidence of concerted educational action in Anglo-Jewry. And quite recently in the Metropolis, in consequence of funds voted by the Shechitah Board, there is still further progress in educational co-ordination. This latter co-ordination seems, however, largely to be guided by the cost of teaching per child; a course which carries with it the obvious danger of valuing and aiding religious education according to its cheapness.

This proves once more that concerted action in education leads to uncertain results, unless it is preceded by 'earnest consideration', i.e. by thorough study and sympathetic understanding of the meaning and scope of its principles and problems. Huxley, it is said, was once on his way to a meeting of the British Association in Dublin; and, arriving late at the station, he threw himself into a cab and called out to its owner, 'Drive fast.' Away went the cab, jolting over the streets, when Huxley, till then buried in thought, suddenly inquired: 'Do you know where we are going?' Whereupon the driver answered: 'No, I don't know where we are going, but, anyhow, I'm driving fast.' In the same way, the most tremendous and many-sided educational endeavour will be of little avail; it will yield totally inadequate results, if there is no clear purpose and aim—

the ripe fruit of earnest consideration—guiding that activity.

It is my hope to contribute by my words this morning to a more lucid understanding of the *meaning* and *scope* of Jewish education. 'Education' is nowadays on everybody's lips, and there is none so rich or ignorant but does it reverence. In consequence, no little confusion, nay contradiction, must necessarily exist in the connotations which all sorts and conditions of men attach to that term. It was John Stuart Mill who said that the world could not be too often reminded that there once lived a man called Socrates. Socrates was an epoch-maker in the history of humanity, because he showed men the way of avoiding confusion of thought, by always insisting on *defining* the key-terms in any subject under discussion. What we are in need of to-day is a definition of education that shall enable us to see our duty steadily and see it whole in our educational thinking and striving. There is nothing un-Jewish in such a desideratum. When the Lawgiver was bidden to build the Sanctuary, a divine pattern was shown to Moses on the Mount, and according to that pattern was the Sanctuary erected. <sup>2</sup> וראה ועשה בתבניתם אשר אחה מראה בהר Without a similar pattern of things as they ought to be in our educational world, even our concerted endeavours will remain blundering and fragmentary.

## II

What, then, is education? There are nearly as many definitions of it as of religion. None of them is perfect or exhaustive and, in the nature of things, none of them

<sup>2</sup> Exodus xxv. 40.

commands universal assent. It has been my privilege to sit at the feet of one of the world's leading education-ists, Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler ; and his conception of education is, to my thinking, the Ariadne-thread that will lead us through the maze of empirical opinion on this matter. Dr. Butler maintains that all education must start from the child and lead into human civilization; and he conceives of education as the process which gradually endows the child with that human knowledge to which, as a human being, he has an inalienable right ; i.e. the language, the literature and the social institutions of his native land ; the rudiments of science and art ; and the fundamentals of the religious life. Education is thus the gradual adjustment of the child to the spiritual possessions of the race.<sup>3</sup> Jewish education, therefore, would be *the gradual adjustment of the Jewish child to the spiritual possessions of Israel*. I must resist the temptation of dwelling on the important phrase 'gradual adjustment', which pre-supposes the centrality of the child and demands the gradual adjustment of the spiritual possessions to the capacity of the child. Our immediate interest in this profoundly original definition lies in the two words, 'spiritual possessions'. Unless there is a conviction that we Jews, whether as a people or as a church, *have* spiritual possessions; spiritual possessions of infinite worth and transcendent value ; spiritual possessions that are incommensurable and for which we should be prepared to sacrifice everything, including life itself—all talk of Jewish education is but sound and smoke signifying nothing.

Some years ago, I declared: 'In religious things,

<sup>3</sup> *The Meaning of Education*, p. 17.

Israel has nothing to learn from the Western peoples or from Oxford. Long before Oxford, Israel was ; and long after Oxford shall have ceased to be, Israel will endure.' A number of assimilationists disapproved of this sentiment. For we cannot close our eyes to the unpalatable fact that, broadly speaking, there are to-day two parties in Israel. On the one hand, there are Jews in whom the wish to remain Jews burns but feebly. Though they continue to be affiliated with Jewish institutions, and are buried—and in some cases cremated—with Jewish rites ; though for philanthropic, sentimental or opportunist reasons they are loth to cut themselves off completely from their brethren ; they yet believe in the eventual submergence of Jews, as Jews, in their environment. They have not unjustly been classified by a recent writer as 'temporary' Jews.<sup>4</sup> They know little of the spiritual possessions of Israel, and care less. To such men, the Jew's paramount duty is to simulate an identity of mind and soul with his non-Jewish neighbours ; and Jewish educational theory is to them a weariness of flesh.

On the other hand, there are those to whom Judaism is the only conceivable vesture of their spiritual world. Such Jews deem no sacrifice too great for the Jewish upbringing of their children. In their eyes, this duty outweighs in importance all other duties. תלמוד תורה בנגד כלם.<sup>5</sup> Their dearest and most dominant desire is to transmit to their children after them the spiritual wonders of Judaism, so that they ever love and live the Jewish life and rejoice in their full Jewish heritage.

<sup>4</sup> Dushkin, *Jewish Education in New York*, 1918.

<sup>5</sup> Mishnah, Peah I.

## III

What is this full Jewish heritage, and which are these spiritual possessions, to which every Jewish child, by virtue of his or her birth, is entitled? There are *at least* four such possessions; and I hope to convince you that only when the child has acquired all the four, has the possibility of a complete Judaism and Jewishness been given that child. They are:—

1. *Jewish Religion.*
2. *The Hebrew Language.*
3. *The Sacred Scriptures.*
4. *Jewish History.*

The first of the spiritual possessions of Israel is the *Jewish Religion*—the positive Jewish beliefs concerning God, the Torah and Israel; the teachings and practices, the symbols and institutions which have come down to the House of Israel through the ages. 'The Jew', says Leo Tolstoy, 'is that sacred being who has brought down from Heaven the everlasting fire, and has illumined with it the entire world. He is the religious source, spring, and fountain out of which all the rest of the peoples have drawn their beliefs and their religions'. Shall not, then, the soul of every Jewish child, as a member of the People of Religion, be made to thrill with the joyful knowledge of Jewish belief and Jewish religious life? This cannot be done without special and adequate instruction in Religion. 'It is a delusion to imagine', rightly says Dayan Feldman, 'that faith and belief will inculcate themselves, and can be picked up on the way without any conscious effort.' Jewish parents and teachers need to be reminded that Religion

as a distinct subject of instruction is not a modernist fad. Abraham Jagel's *Lekach Tov*, the earliest catechism of the Jewish religion, appeared in 1509; and is approvingly quoted by no less a man than Isaiah Hurwitz, the saintly author of שני לוחות הברית. Abraham Jagel's book, by the way, was one of the earliest Hebrew books published in England, appearing with a Latin translation in 1679. During the last generation we have the classical books of the late Dr. Michael Friedländer on the Jewish Religion; the Rev. Morris Joseph's *Judaism as Creed and Life*; as well as Dr. Julius H. Greenstone's splendid manuals.

I am well aware that this recommendation of the systematic teaching of the tenets, ethics and practices of Judaism runs counter to a prejudice amounting almost to a dogma, both among the ultra-Orthodox as well as among the rationalists, against such positive instruction in Religion. In an otherwise useful book, recently published by the United Synagogue of America, entitled *A Curriculum of Religious Schools*, by A. F. Landesman we read:

'It is needless to remark to Jewish Religious School teachers that religion must not be taught as a branch of study, but religious concepts must be developed in connexion with all the studies of the curriculum.'

There is, of course, much to be said for the contention that religious concepts be developed in connexion with all the subjects of the curriculum. Thus, the greater part of our religious beliefs can very well be imparted to little children when teaching them the Festivals; and if this method be duly followed, a special text-book of religious instruction is not essential in the lower standards of the School. But what are the facts? In the



innumerable examinations held by me in the course of my Pastoral peregrinations, I rarely find either systematic instruction of the Festivals or that their religious significance is fully brought out. 'Oh, we teach them as they come,' is the usual reply of the teacher. That teaching, however, does not seem to be particularly sound and thorough. Thus when I ask the question: 'Why do we observe *Shavuons*?'—I am, as a rule, told something about a barley harvest. Only in exceptional cases has Pentecost's eternal meaning to us and to all the generations after us, that it is *זמן מן תורתנו* the anniversary of the Giving of the Law—been brought home to the class. I never fail to impress upon such teachers, whether in the Metropolis, the Provinces or the Overseas Communities, that no Jewish child can grow to be a good Jew or Jewess if he or she does not know the Shema and all it means and has meant to the Jew; or the significance of such terms as Sepher Torah, Tzedoko (charity) or Teshuvah (repentance), and their pivotal importance in Judaism. Our young—we are told—religiously move in worlds not realized; too often are they victims of self-contempt, because they are quite ignorant of the fact that the ethical driving-forces in the world's best life to-day are Jewish. Such ignorance, however, would disappear if the religious concepts that cluster round the Festivals were duly interpreted to them, culminating in a sympathetic study of the fundamental principles of the Jewish religious consciousness.

Some people, again, strongly object to positive instruction in the tenets of Judaism on the ground that such study is 'theology'. This is a childish argument. Whenever we put our beliefs into words, whenever we

harmonize and formulate them, we have theology—which dreadful word only means, ordered thinking in matters of religion. The adolescent boy and girl will in the future be so many times called upon to state and defend their religious position, that they should be helped gradually to acquire an intelligent formulation of Jewish Belief. Too many of our adolescents have, alas, just enough familiarity with Judaism for ridicule, but not enough for reverence. Let them learn the full content of Jewish idealism, and there will be little danger that in the years to come they will say: צר לי המקום שאלין: 'Jerusalem is too narrow for me to find spiritual lodgment therein'.<sup>6</sup>

#### IV

The second of the Jew's spiritual possessions is the *Hebrew Language*. The Hebrew language is,

'the golden hinge upon which our national and religious existence turns . . . Flowing down from the hills of eternity, the Hebrew language has been set apart by God for truths destined to sway mankind and humanize the world.'

These are the words of my revered teacher, Dr. Sabato Morais ז"ל. Hebrew is Israel's historic language, and the key to all of Israel's treasures; and, being the key and receptacle of Israel's message to mankind, none other, whether living or dead, has had such a vast and eternal span of influence. It is the most important of human tongues, the language of languages, the Sacred Tongue, לשון הקודש.

It is from that angle, as the Sacred Tongue, that the Jewish religious School must view it. Like Moses of

<sup>6</sup> Ethics of the Fathers, v. 8.

old, I am ready to exclaim:<sup>7</sup> Would that every child of Israel were a נביא (prophet)—which etymologically means a fluent speaker of Hebrew—in order that every child penetrate to the undistorted and undiluted meaning of the Hebrew Truth. For the overwhelming majority of children in our Hebrew and Religion Classes, however, Hebrew speaking is something quite out of the question ; and, living as we do in a relative universe, it serves no purpose to thunder on the gates of the impossible. Not more than two or three children in a hundred will attain to a living and abiding mastery of Hebrew speech ; and these will devote as many hours to Hebrew per day as the others do per week. I am thinking of those ‘others’. Every Jewish child is entitled to the safe possession of an intimate, even if not extensive, knowledge of the Sacred Tongue which shall give that child a lot and portion in the Synagogue, the heart of Jewish communal life. And if we can succeed in giving 97 per cent. of our children a knowledge of the Sacred Tongue sufficient to enable their joining intelligently in Synagogue worship, we shall, for the present, have good reason to be satisfied with our achievement.

It follows from the above, that Hebrew is not to be taught as a secular language but as the Sacred Tongue. Especially *in* and *through* their instruction in the Hebrew language should Jewish children be taught as Jews, and trained for Judaism. Twenty years have passed since I first urged the production of Hebrew text-books that should prepare English-speaking children for the Siddur ; and I continued urging this in the

<sup>7</sup> Numbers xi. 29

Council of Jewish Education which six or seven years ago arranged the publication of the first of Dr. Schoenfeld's helpful books. Far more, however, must be done in this field. The majority of text-books now in vogue were produced for the absolutely different school-conditions in Eastern Europe and Palestine. They are quite unsuitable for the children in English-speaking lands, where, moreover, the time is often limited to two or three hours a week. In our Classes, we must first of all concentrate on the blessings, the responses, the foundation prayers; and these must be explained not only grammatically, but *religiously*. Such religious explanations alone will make these prayers become part of the child's deepest being. Parrot-like repetition of a string of Hebrew words, each one interspersed with its English equivalent, only too successfully defeats the purpose of Hebrew instruction—which is to help the children to cultivate and cherish the habit of prayer as one of life's supreme privileges.

At the same time, let us not forget that among those who are loudest in condemning *Ivrith b'Ivrith* instruction because of its secularization of Hebrew, are to be found men who would like to see the Hebrew language banished altogether from the curriculum. Their condemnation thus smacks somewhat of hypocrisy, with perhaps a touch of *Rishus*. It is infinitely better to teach Hebrew by the *Ivrith b'Ivrith* method, whatever its drawbacks, than with suicidal blindness not to teach it at all. A Hebrew-less Jewry has no future, because it cannot fairly be said to have even a present.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schechter, *Seminary Addresses*.

## V

And if the Principles of Judaism and the Sacred Tongue of Israel are indispensable, equally so is the source of our Faith and Language alike, our life and the length of our days—our *Sacred Scriptures*. The child should first of all have a perfect familiarity with the beginnings of Israel's story as related in the Pentateuch. Yet—as you read in the Report of the Director of Education :

‘Scripture history shows more weakness than any other subject. Sometimes it does not figure in the syllabus at all, and the child is left to pick up his impressions from the instruction given in the Council School.’

Such a state of affairs is a crime against Jewish childhood. The stories from Genesis, for example, are absolutely irreplaceable in the moral and religious culture of young children. Age cannot wither them, nor custom stale their eternal freshness. Like summer, like the starry skies, like joy, like childhood itself, they will always touch and enthrall the human soul with their marvellous beauty. The fact that, after having been repeated for three thousand years and longer, these stories still possess a perfect attraction to children proves that there is in them something of imperishable worth. There is no other literature in the world which offers that something. This is recognized even in educational circles that are far removed not only from the Traditional attitude towards the Bible, but even from the religious outlook. Thus, the leader of Ethical Movement many years ago pointed out that the uniqueness of these stories consists in the fact that they are ‘saturated

with the moral spirit. Duty, guilt and its punishment, the conflict of conscience with inclination—are the leading themes.’<sup>9</sup> And what is pre-eminently true of Genesis, applies to the whole of Bible history. Not by means of abstract formulae is there the message of God and duty brought to the soul of man, but by means of *lives* of human beings who feel and fail, who stumble and sin as we do; yet, who in their darkest groping, remain conscious of the one true way—and rise again, ever striving upward, heavenward, Godward. ‘By the study of what other book’, asks the greatest agnostic of the nineteenth century, ‘could children be so much humanized, and made to feel that each figure in the vast procession of history fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between the Eternities; and earns the blessings or the curses of all time according to its effort to do good and hate evil?’<sup>10</sup>

This applies with tenfold force to the Jewish child, because we can plant in him the sense of his personal identity with his people—a mighty lever to impress upon him the sacred obligations that his noble descent imposes. A recent publication of the United Synagogue of America offers an excellent guide to the teacher in this most important subject. I refer to Rabbi Eugene Kohn’s *Manual for Teaching Biblical History*. But we must go beyond the Pentateuch, and teach the whole Bible story. This can be done even in our limited time, if less stress is laid on the mass of dry facts in Bible history, and more on the living truths

<sup>9</sup> F. Adler, *Moral Instruction of Children*, International Education Series.

<sup>10</sup> Huxley, *Educational Essays*.

underneath the narration of the facts. It is these truths enshrined not only in Bible history, but in prophecy, psalm, proverb and moral discourse, that are of transcendent worth to the child, who is the father of the man and woman of to-morrow. The health, nay the very life, of men and nations depends upon their knowledge and understanding of these truths. Through these truths, the Bible is a Tree of Life to them that grasp it ; and it is for the Jewish Religious School to help each child have a firm grasp on that Tree of Life.

## VI

We now come to the fourth of Israel's spiritual possessions—*Jewish History*. Jewish History is a continuous revelation, with a divine lesson *for* each generation, and *in* each generation. Nobody can understand the Jew—the Jew cannot understand himself—if he knows nothing of Jewish history except the *Chumesh*, or the Bible, or even his Josephus. ‘Man is made man by history’, said that many-sided Anglo-Jewish scholar, the late Dr. Joseph Jacobs. Almost as much can be said of the Jew and Jewish History. Say not that it is an impossible task for our Religion Classes to include such a vast subject in the overcrowded curriculum. All that is required is a survey of the epochal events and personalities, with appropriate selections from our imperishable literary monuments. Not more than fifty names and dates are really necessary for that purpose. Some years ago, I planned *A Book of Jewish Worthies* on these lines, a companion volume to my *Book of Jewish Thoughts*. Till I find the time—if ever—to carry out this idea, I would point to a splendid

achievement in this direction, to S. Müller's *Ueberblick über die biblische und nachbiblische jüdische Geschichte*, that should be translated and adapted for our purpose.

But some survey of post-Biblical history we must have. Only he who has wept over the tragedy of Israel and has been inspired by the story of our martyrs, who knows something of the wealth of our literature and of our contributions to the humanization of man, can have the proud Jewish consciousness that he is a member of a holy and indomitable People. Only he who, through the study of Jewish History, has been made to feel that Israelites of all times and in all lands are brethren, no matter how different they may be from each other outwardly—will understand the meaning of the Unity of Israel, with its great ethical corollaries, the warning against the profanation of the Jewish Name (*Chillul Hashem*) and the sublime duty of hallowing the Name of God (*Kiddush Hashem*). Jewish History has not only longitude—teaching the Jew to take long and eternal views; it has latitude as well—endowing him with broad and large-hearted sympathy for *all* his brethren. In my Pastoral tours, I have on numberless occasions told the story of the 'Soldiers of Nicholas'; of those little boys who were kidnapped by order of Czar Nicholas I, and were to be trained, under changed names, as Russian soldiers. Stolen as little boys of nine and ten, and doomed to remain in the Army for thirty years, they forgot, as the years went on, the faces of their fathers and mothers, they forgot their prayers, they forgot their native Yiddish: and all this while they were flogged and tortured and bribed by the priests and the officers in order to seduce them from



their Faith. In vain. They were Jews and nothing could make them change.<sup>11</sup> A story of martyrdom like this, of helpless little children defying the will of the Czar, must fill every Jewish child with holy reverence for the mass of his Russian brethren, who have been the victims of such and even more terrible persecution in our own day. A story like this will help to keep him free from that *damnosa hereditas* of the Mendelssohnian School—contempt for the mother-tongue of half the world's Jewry, which contempt is the infallible sign of the Westernized Jewish Philistine. That attitude towards the Russian Jew and his language is especially calamitous in a teacher, because it is calculated to turn the poorest Jewish children—and it is these who form the majority in most Hebrew and Religion Classes—into little Hams, who despise or even openly mock their parents.

That leader of British educational opinion, Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, the other day declared it to be the office of education to counteract the new barbarism which city life brings upon the masses of a nation. Too many newspapers—he said—too many cinemas, too many distractions of the thoroughfare and of the market-place frittered away the soul, and favoured the growth of the slum-mind. Needless to state, signs are not wanting that the Jewish soul likewise is being frittered away by the vulgarities and distractions of the thoroughfare and of the market-place. There is only one cure for the slum-mind in the case of the Jew, whether rich or poor ;

<sup>11</sup> Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*. For an historical account of these child-martyrdoms, see Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, ii. 18-29.

and that is, the ghetto-mind—with its sweetness and light, with its high faith and invincible courage, with its holiness of home and reverence for learning, with its genial humour, all-conquering optimism and inner freedom. All these things are the heritage of him who has learned the lesson of Jewish History and acquired the Jewish mentality and outlook. It is Jewish History that changes the attitude of the Jew, not only to Judaism and his fellow Jews, but to the world and humanity at large.

## VII

We have now passed under review the four primal elements of Jewish Culture—the *Jewish Religion*, the *Hebrew Language*, the *Sacred Scriptures* and *Jewish History*—which it is for us to transmit to those that come after us. If we wish them to be Jews and to remain Jews, all these four must be taught—and not three or two or one only. What the *Din* says of the four species of the Lulav-cluster, ארבעה מינים מעבבים זה את זה, that the absence of any single one of the four species renders the whole Lulav unfit, applies to these four aspects of the Jewish Spirit. The absence of any single one of these elements in the upbringing of a Jewish child, or even the presence of one of these elements in a withered or unworthy form, endangers the whole; and will give us apologetic half-Jews instead of loyal, Jewish Jews.

Our rich and poor alike fail, or are unwilling, to realize the absolute necessity of including all these four elements in the Jewish upbringing of their children. On the one hand, many wealthy Jewish parents imagine

that by arranging a half-hour's weekly lesson in Jewish things for their children they are doing their full Jewish duty. They are only deceiving themselves. Multitudes of our poor brethren, on the other hand, commit an even graver wrong. They refuse to see that these four spiritual possessions are the prerogative of *every* Jewish child, the girls as well as the boys.

It is but too true that in the past the standard of education for Jewish girls was immeasurably lower than it was in the case of boys. This did not then much matter, as in the sheltered life of olden ghetto, the morale of Jewish women remained unharmed by this narrow educational ideal. 'The Jewish woman vied with her husband in an admiration for a religious culture which she was not permitted to share', says the Rev. M. Joseph in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*; <sup>12</sup> 'her greatest pride was to have sons learned in the Torah. She was, above everything, modest and chaste, and she could immolate herself as a martyr when the need arose.' Quite other is the condition, and also the problem, that confront us to-day: 'Ours is a new anxiety, unknown to Jewry before', says a great Jewish scholar; <sup>13</sup> 'the anxiety about the religious education, the religious loyalty, of our women.' It is for us to face the danger. But we shall never successfully grapple with it, if we do not atone for the great sin which former generations in Israel were guilty of in this regard. <sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Vol. v, 'Education (Jewish)'.

<sup>13</sup> Prof. David Kauffmann, 'How shall we raise the Religious Sense of our Girls and Women?' in *The Sinaist*, vol. ii.

<sup>14</sup> Solitary voices were, of course, raised against this neglect. Rabbi Judah the Pious, in the twelfth century, writes:

Eighteen months ago, I drew up and circulated a code for a Course of Instruction for Girls that should equip them for life's duties with an understanding of the principles and practices of our Faith, and the history of our People. Those ministers who have completed this course of study with the girls under their charge, as well as their congregations, speak with enthusiasm of the new outlook that such study and serious preparation brings to the girls as well as to their parents. Given the co-operation of even half the clergy and some of the responsible laity, there would soon be in force a standard requirement in religious knowledge for both girls and boys.

Once again the life of the Jewish child must be dominated from his earliest years by sacred symbols and observances, by fast and festival, that link him to his people, and sanctify him to become a worthy sharer of his People's glories in the past and a tireless co-worker in its sacred tasks in the present and future. Viewed under the Jewish aspect of education as consecration, all religion is educational, and all education religious.

## VIII

'Yes, this is quite true of the old Jew'—you say—  
'the Jews of the generations that are definitely behind

'Girls too should receive instruction in the Holy Law. It is true that the Rabbis taught that girls should not be instructed in the Talmud. This only means that it is not necessary for them to pursue Talmudic learning, but girls must share in religious and moral instruction. Every one should know the Divine laws and commandments; youths should learn them in the Hebrew language, women and girls may learn them in their mother tongue. The instruction of girls must be given in a gentle and pleasant manner.' *Sepher Chassidim*, 835.

us. But what of ourselves? What of *our* consecration to the service of God, and our dedication to the welfare of Israel? Is religion to us educational, and is our education religious?’

These are difficult questions; and any useful answer requires knowledge of that larger world of which Anglo-Jewry, nay the whole House of Israel, is but a tiny part. Even a casual glance at that larger world to-day shows, that in most European lands, our age is an age of spiritual aridity, devoid of the fertilizing dew of religious enthusiasm. In Russia and Turkey, there is an unparalleled upheaval in religious life, if not the total ruin of organized religion. But even in English-speaking lands there is religious drifting, and what can at best be described as impatience with all authority, moral or spiritual. ‘From a combination of many causes’—says a renowned English author of the last generation<sup>15</sup>—

‘we are passing now into a sea where our charts fail us, and the stars have ceased to shine. The fool clamours that he is as wise as the sage, and the sage shrinks from saying that it is not so. Authority is mute; and there is no longer any word of command. In place of the pilots who stood once at the helm, gave their orders and compelled obedience, we have crews now, all equal, who decide by the majority of votes. We have entered on an age of universal democracy, political and spiritual, such as the world has never seen before.’

And as to conditions in our own camp, I think I can bring these home to you by means of a strange metaphor taken from the Jewish Mystics. The masters of the Cabala tells of a cosmic tragedy that in the morning

<sup>15</sup> J. A. Froude, *Short Studies of Great Subjects*, ‘Annals of an English Abbey’.

of time befell the Universe; and they speak of it as שבירת הכלים 'The breaking of the vessels'. God, in Jewish mystic belief, is the eternal source of Light and Truth and Goodness; but, being the Infinite, He is inscrutable and unknowable, beyond direct human comprehension. It is only through various 'channels' and vessels and agencies that His light and truth and goodness can enter the souls of mortals. But the Divine light proves too strong for these vessels. The vessels break. The Divine light and outer darkness intermingle, and chaos is the result. The chaos is so complete that evil is never entirely without some 'sparks' or beams of Divine good: while, on the other hand, the good is rarely free from evil that shadows it; nay, that, like a husk, envelops it. Our world, in consequence, is not the World of Harmonies that God intended it to be; but a World of Husks, of appearances, confusion and make-believe.<sup>16</sup>

Does it not seem as if this cosmic tragedy of which the Mystics speak, had repeated itself in many a Jewish community during the last century and a half? Owing to the political, social and economic changes that followed the fall of the ghettos, the 'channels' through which the light and truth and beauty of Judaism had flowed down the ages, have somehow ceased to function. There began a gradual breakdown in the religious machinery of Jewry for transmitting the Divine light of Sinai to the hearts and souls of our people. Thus, schools of Jewish Learning became deserted. The knowledge of Judaism—the heritage of the Congregation of Jacob—was relegated to a profession. Instead of the

<sup>16</sup> See Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, II, 'Safed'.

clear proud עברי אני 'I am an Hebrew',<sup>17</sup> our youth began to *stammer* their adherence to their Faith and People. As for the elders, well, even in our land, there are scores of parents, to whom the very idea of a Jewish School is an abhorrence, and even a 'Jewish House' an absurdity. They send their children to Public Schools with compulsory Chapel attendance and obligatory New Testament instruction. What is more, they tell you that they believe that they can beneficially do so without loss to the effective Judaism of their children, nay 'with complete and open loyalty to their Faith!' In all this moral confusion, the voice of religious authority is expected to be discreet, diplomatic, mute. Should such religious authority, however, be unbending and protestant against this materialism and self-deception, he is branded 'a troubler of Israel' and a promoter of schism. The days of the Judges have come again. There is no king in Israel; every man does that which is right in his own eyes.

## IX

So much for the diagnosis of the disease—what of the remedy? The Jewish Mystics have also indicated the way for mortals to emerge from the World of Appearance and make-believe, and gradually—without haste and without rest—to reconstruct the World of Harmonies, the World of Truth. One hope exists for this universe of ours—they tell us—and one great task for humanity; and this hope and task they call העלאת הניצוצות 'the separation of the sparks' (literally the 'raising of the sparks'), i. e. the freeing of the beams of Heavenly light

<sup>17</sup> Jonah i. 9.

from the husks of Darkness that encrust them ; the elimination of the evil from the good ; the separation of the good and true from both the half-good and half-true as well as from the wholly evil and wholly false. That way alone Redemption lies.

Now it is the privilege of the Jewish teacher to perform this task of separating the good and the true in Jewish life from the half-good and the half-true, as well as from the wholly evil and wholly false ; and thus it is his glorious mission to make Redemption possible.<sup>18</sup> He is the guardian of the Holy of Holies of Judaism—of the pure hearts and undefined souls of our little children. He can save them from heathenism and half-Judaism. He is the latter-day Isaiah who exclaims : ‘ Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness ! ’ His is sacred work : without noise of axe and hammer, he quarries and shapes the human building-stones for the Temple of Israel’s future.

I am only too well aware that the Jewish teacher’s task to-day is as difficult as it is divine. He must often labour without tools ; without the ‘ gradual adjustment ’ by appropriate text-books of the subject-matter taught to the capacity of the child ; without the ‘ correlation ’ of the various cognate subjects, which correlation alone can render possible the transmitting in the limited time of all the essential spiritual possessions. *היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה*. Verily, the day is short ; and the work is not only *רבה* great, but *מרובה* complicated and hampered by the absence of a religious background in the home, to say

<sup>18</sup> “ They that turn many unto righteousness ” (Daniel xii. 3)—this refers to the teachers of the young.—Talm. Baba Bathra 8 b.



nothing of insufficiency of material recognition of the efforts of the teacher. But none of the things will paralyse a Cause; so long as its labourers are not hirelings, but are servants who serve their Master not merely for the sake of reward. By faith in God, by loyalty to the Torah, by pedagogical tact and charity of judgment, by love of Israel and devotion to Israel's future, the Jewish teacher will adjust our boys and girls to the spiritual possessions of Israel. He will rear them as God-fearing men and women; fill them with noble pride in the heroism and martyrdom of their People; create in them the holy resolve to consecrate their lives to the welfare and glory of Israel; and fit them to take their share in the perpetuation of all those Jewish institutions which are the present-day and eternal embodiment of Jewish belief, Jewish aspiration and Jewish idealism.

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## VIII

### THE BROTHERHOOD OF ISRAEL

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Yithro 5687,  
22 January 1927, at the East London  
Synagogue, London.*

IN these pulpit addresses on the Affirmations of Judaism, I am considering one by one the teachings of Judaism as indicated in the *אחד מי יודע* song. In the last address, I explained that true religious education is primarily moral discipline and must be based on the Ten Commandments. The next link in the chain of Israel's spiritual data in that Passover song are the *Eleven Stars of Joseph*. Now, the character and story of Joseph have from of old been held to be typical of the character and story of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Like Joseph, the Jew has been the dreamer of the ages, dreaming Israel's dream of universal justice and peace and brotherhood. Like Joseph, he has everywhere been the helpless victim of the hatred of his step-brethren, hatred that drove him from home and doomed him to exile. In that exile he has, like Joseph, times without number resisted the great Temptation of disloyalty to the God of his fathers.<sup>2</sup> In the dream of Joseph, the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him. It is the stars that bow to *him*, and not he to the stars. This is characteristic of both Joseph and Israel.

<sup>1</sup> מִן שְׂאִירֵעַ לְיוֹסֵף אִירֵעַ לְצִיּוֹן, Midrash Bereshith Rabba c. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Talm. Sotah 36 b.

לִישְׂרָאֵל אֵין מִזֵּל לִישְׂרָאֵל says Rabbi Johanan.<sup>3</sup> 'An Israelite should be ashamed to blame his star, his environment or any outward circumstance for his moral downfall or his religious apostasy.' Man is captain of his own soul; and wherever there is a will to Judaism, there is a way to lead the Jewish life. Joseph was the viceroy of Egypt; yet he remained a loyal son of Israel. When his aged father followed him to Egypt, his grandchildren, Ephraim and Manasseh, were adopted by Jacob as the co-equals of the other ten sons. Consider the significance of this action. It meant that Joseph would not suffer his children to barter away their 'Jewishness' for the most exalted social position, or the most enviable political career in the Egyptian State. It meant, Ephraim and Manasseh voluntarily gave up their place in the higher Egyptian aristocracy; that they openly identified themselves with their 'alien' kinsmen, the despised shepherd-immigrants. No wonder that to this day every pious Jewish father on Friday eve places his hand on the head of his son, and blesses him in the words: יִשְׁמַךְ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם וּכְמָנַשֶׁה 'God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh'.<sup>4</sup> Every pious Jewish father may well pray that his children show the same loyalty to their father and their father's God as did Ephraim and Manasseh in their day.

How are we to endow *our* children with the moral power to make the stars bow unto them? What can we do that our children, like Ephraim and Manasseh, deem their Jewish name their most sacred possession on earth? This is the baffling master-problem in Jewish

<sup>3</sup> Talm. Nedarim 52a.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis xlviii. 20; Authorized Prayer Book, p. 122.

education which, alas, fewer and fewer Jewish parents of to-day know how to solve. However, in our Pass-over song, Joseph's Eleven Stars are preceded by the Ten Commandments, עשרה דבריא and followed by the Twelve Tribes שנים עשר שבטא. In other words, if you desire to reproduce the moral miracle of Joseph's Eleven Stars in the life of your children, there are two indispensable prerequisites: עשרה דבריא the Law of God as the basis of your life and the life of your children; and שנים עשר שבטא, the realization by your children of the Brotherhood of Israel.

In consciousness of the *Brotherhood of Israel* lies the moral safety and the spiritual strength of both young and old. A rock on the edge of the ocean can defy the onslaught of the waves and withstand all the winds of heaven. Whereas, a small fragment of that same rock will become a plaything of both wind and wave. The child will, in the years of manhood and womanhood, be exposed to many a storm of temptation, and many an onslaught of misfortune; and if left to himself, he will inevitably be a helpless plaything of these temptations and misfortunes. But link that same child with a community, bind the soul of the future man to the soul of his fathers before him, and that spiritual solidarity fortifies him amid the trials and tribulations of life. The thought that every Israelite holds the honour of his Faith and of his entire People in his hands, that a single Jewish offence can bring shame on the whole house of Israel, ennobled the life of the Jew, and made him exceedingly heedful to beware of a *Chillul Hashem*—any action that might leave a stain on the Jewish name. And this anxiety for the honour of Israel remains a

dominant motive in the private and public conduct of the Jew, as long as he feels himself a member of a living Jewish group and a sharer in its fame or its shame. The solemn warning 'Ye shall not profane My holy Name, for I will be hallowed among the children of Israel',<sup>5</sup> has, however, no meaning to any one who denies the claims of Jewish brotherhood. Such an uprooted being may be quite willing to be a *מחבדר בקלן עמו*, i. e. seek his own honour by defaming his people; and claim credit, say, for super-patriotism by casting doubt on the civic loyalty of his brethren. { 'Whoever separates himself from the community, refusing to share in the sorrows of his fellow Jews, as if he were not one of them, that man has no portion in the world to come', } is a saying of Maimonides that is as profound as it is true.

That way lies one of the cardinal sins of Liberal Judaism. It pursues a policy of definite estrangement from the collective consciousness of the Jewish People and the Jewish past. In the sensational newspaper-articles and interviews by which the local leaders advertise and magnify their movement,<sup>7</sup> they never fail

<sup>5</sup> Leviticus xxii. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah, iii. 11.

<sup>7</sup> 'A Peer's Sister Preaches in a Synagogue'; 'Jewish Move Towards Christianity'; 'Jewry at the Crossroads'; 'The Largest Synagogue in Great Britain'—are some of the head-lines. British Jews have always been loth to ventilate their inner religious differences in public. Representations were, therefore, made to put a stop to these interviews and articles; but with no success. Other articles followed; among them 'Liberal Judaism and the Modern State' in the *Spectator*, in which it was suggested that an Orthodox Jew must either be religiously inconsistent or disloyal to the State. This baseless aspersion on Judaism and the over-

to emphasize that their form of Judaism cuts straight at the root of customs and laws more than 2,000 years old ; that, among other things, they permit work on the Sabbath and do not deem fasting essential on the Day of Atonement ;<sup>8</sup> and that, rather than recede from the position they have taken up, they would separate themselves from Jewry altogether. Again, in their conference held in July last, the minister of the local synagogue did not hesitate to reject the God of Israel, and the leader of the whole movement repeated his usual plea for what he calls adequate Jewish recognition of the Founder of Christianity.<sup>9</sup> In fairness, I must add that, owing to a confusion of terms,<sup>10</sup> a number of men who strictly

whelming majority of the Jews of this country, was in due course taken up by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

<sup>8</sup> The very things they boast of in these articles were denied in the Protest issued by the leaders of the Jewish Religious Union against the *New Paths* in January 1926.

<sup>9</sup> *The Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 14 July 1926 : 'Dr. Mattuck declared that the God of the Bible was not his God'. 'Mr. C. G. Montefiore believed that ultimately Liberal Judaism would have to come to a clear understanding with regard to the teaching of Jesus Christ, which would be more in accordance with the whole meaning of the civilized world to-day.'

<sup>10</sup> In German, 'Liberal Judaism' does not convey the ruthless radicalism which it denotes in England and America. That radicalism is expressed in Germany by the term *Reformjudentum*. 'Wir sind liberale Juden aber wir werden Niemanden erlauben uns Reformjuden zu nennen' (We are Liberal Jews, but we will not permit any one to speak of us as Reform Jews), was the indignant protestation of one of the German delegates. This confusion of terms is responsible for the presence at the Conference of men like Rabbi Goldmann, of Leipsic. ('He had heard American delegates say things which he would never have

adhere to the traditional service, the dietary and Sabbath laws, attended that conference; and these expressed their amazement at some of the utterances which they heard. There were also those who resented the chairman's attacks on the Bible; and others who urged that persistent Liberal opposition to National Jewish aspirations was calculated to destroy Jewish Brotherhood.<sup>11</sup>

believed. He wanted to state quite definitely that Liberal Judaism in Germany was absolutely different from Liberal Judaism in America.') That this confusion was not unknown to the conveners of the conference is seen from the fact that the questionnaire sent out with the invitations to Germany contained the query: '*Reflektieren Sie auf koscher?*'.

<sup>11</sup> There was not a single Jewish postulate—whether it be the Bible or the Hebrew language, the dietary laws or Zionism—on which the members of the conference were in agreement. Altogether it was further evidence of the spiritual disintegration of Liberal Judaism. This is beginning to be felt *within* the ranks, and not only by 'bigots' without. Thus, a prominent Liberal American rabbi—Dr. Alexander Lyons—writes to me:

'Thanks for your copy of the *New Paths*. You may be surprised to hear that after a careful perusal I find myself in fundamental agreement with your criticisms of Liberal Judaism. I am by conviction and conduct a Liberal Jew. I have been identified with the movement long enough to be entitled to a judgment. I find that many of the objections of Orthodoxy to it are valid. Mainly it is without an appealing background of authority and gives too much scope for individual action, converting Liberalism into licence. Liberal Judaism shows also decided failure to promote Jewish cultural values, with resulting loss of respect for the Torah as in a vital sense Divine in origin and purpose. It lacks loving study of and devotion to the subject. The Liberal Jew handles religious education in a superficial way that promises little good.

In consequence, he has to be attracted and held by things of transient appeal and interest. Hence the quality of work that is done, especially on Sunday morning, in many Jewish

I have been asked why, in the circumstances, Orthodox Jewry does not officially recognize that men who proclaim such views have ruled themselves out of the ranks of Israel. Let history supply the answer. It is over a hundred and fifty years ago, that the later followers of Sabbethai Zevi, under the leadership of the notorious Jacob Frank, attacked Jews and Judaism far more bitterly than ever did Liberals in Berlin, Chicago, or London. Yet, the Chassidic legend relates, when Frank and his followers at last publicly left Judaism and joined the Catholic Church, the great Israel Baalshem wept the whole night through and refused to be comforted. 'A man's arm may be paralysed or sorely diseased', he exclaimed, 'still there is always hope that it will regain its health and vigour. But if it is amputated, all hope of healing is gone for ever.' It is needless to point the moral or the application of this beautiful legend.

But we who believe in the God of Israel and in the Torah of Israel; we who believe in the People of Israel, in its perpetuity, unity, and spiritual power; how are we to plant Jewish Brotherhood within the souls of our children so that nothing Jewish be alien unto them; that to them Israel be like a harp-string which, wherever it is struck, vibrates throughout? How can we prevent different Jewries from drifting apart, disintegrating, disappearing? The answer that first comes to our lips is, By means of Jewish religious education. Now,

pulpits in this country. I find many pulpits furnishing a sort of sublimated vaudeville entertainment. Their object is to gain a crowd at almost any price. Accordingly, scintillating superficiality is made to substitute for Jewish scholarship and culture.'



no one will dispute that religious education is the indispensable basis for our survival. But it is only the basis of Jewish life ; it is not the whole edifice. Knowledge alone cannot, and will not, ensure the true Jewishness of our children. 'לא המדרש עיקר אלא המעשה' 'Not learning but doing is the principal thing'.<sup>12</sup> True loyalty is more than a loyalty of mere knowledge and words ; it is a loyalty of life and deeds. And such real loyalty to God and to Israel, manifests itself in at least three activities ; in religious observance, Synagogue affiliation, and participation in the rebuilding of the Holy Land.

The strongest bond binding a Jew to his fellow Jews of other times and lands is *religious observance*. In describing the approach of the tribes of Israel to Mount Sinai, Scripture uses the verb in the singular ויחן שם ישראל נגר החר to indicate that the entire people came to the Giving of the Law כאיש אחד בלב אחד 'as one man, and with one heart'.<sup>13</sup> It is impossible to over-estimate the part played by the symbols, customs, and observances of Judaism in linking the generations and welding the scattered atoms of the House of Israel into one Holy People. Take the laws of food, for example. An illustrious man of science says :<sup>14</sup>

'It may appear a minute matter to pronounce the Hebrew blessing over bread, and to accustom one's children to do so. Yet if a Jew, at the time of partaking of food, remembers the identical words used by his fellow Jews since time immemorial and the world over, he revives in himself, wherever he be at the moment, communion with his imperishable race. In contrast to not a few of our co-religionists who have

<sup>12</sup> Ethics of the Fathers, i. 17.

<sup>13</sup> Rashi on Exodus xix. 2, based on Mechilta *in loco*.

<sup>14</sup> *Menorah Journal*, April 1916, 'A Plea for Orthodoxy'.

no occasion for weeks and months together to bestow a thought on their creed or their people, the Jew who keeps *Kashrus* has to think of his religious and communal allegiance on the occasion of every meal ; and, on every such occasion, the observance of those laws constitutes a renewal of acquiescence in the fact that he is a Jew, and a deliberate acknowledgement of that fact.

The labour and care required for carrying out our religious laws not only do not justify any attempt to simplify or abrogate them, but constitute one of the essential objects of our endeavour in carrying them out in their integrity. For it is in the performance of obligations which call for thought and effort, that the character of men and their loyalty are trained and tested, and that the object of their loyalty is made dear to them and bound up with their lives.'

I heartily endorse these words of Professor Haffkine. I would again repel the suggestion that my aim in these 'Affirmations of Judaism' should be to find a way to abrogate all such symbols and customs, laws and commandments the observance of which involves difficulty or sacrifice. I am not unheeding of the task, nay, the duty of religious adjustment ; of making Jews live up to the highest level of Judaism and of bringing Judaism—in its institutional and communal aspect—up to the level of its best sons ; of thinking anew and acting anew so as to make Orthodoxy a synonym of Progress without loss of essential values. Such thinking anew and acting anew, however, cannot—as some mistakenly believe—be accomplished in the space of one sermon or a series of sermons, by one man or a small group of men. Moreover, every proposed adaptation must be tested by the simple question, Does it strengthen religious authority, and, therefore, promote Jewish unity ; or Does it spell Jewish disintegration, because it encourages

spiritual anarchy? If it does the latter, then it leads not into, but out of, Judaism.<sup>15</sup>

The second bond is *the synagogue*. The Jew who refuses to affiliate himself with the synagogue is everywhere the indifferent Jew, the father of the apostate Jew; and without the synagogue no group of Jews can be said to have a religious life. The Midrash rightly speaks of the synagogue as the 'home' of the Jew, his refuge and spiritual dwelling-place in the fluctuating vicissitudes of his world-old martyrdom. 'In all their long history', says a noted non-Jewish scholar, 'the Jewish people have done scarcely anything more wonderful than to create the Synagogue. No human institution has a longer continuous history, and none has done more for the uplifting of the human race.'<sup>16</sup>

And in the synagogue, our prayers are essentially the

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Cyrus Adler, speaking in 1911, said:

'The Bible was given to us. It has been studied and commented upon for more than twenty centuries. The Oral Law is as old as the Bible; and if we may draw an inference from comparative studies, it is older than the Bible and has all the sanction of antiquity and immemorial usage. The Holy Scriptures, the Oral Law, the Rabbinical Writings, the Codes are authoritative upon Israel. The whole body of our law, teaching, interpretation, history, and tradition form the Constitution of the Jewish People; and membership in the body should depend upon the recognition of the authority of this law, history, and tradition. In the long history of Judaism and of the Jewish People, those who have put themselves beyond this authority, however prosperous, intellectual or powerful they may have been for a time, were lost to Judaism, disappeared as a body and were swallowed up among the nations. The lessons of history are the most inexorable of all lessons. Organized society, institutions, religions, depend upon law and order, and once these are departed from, anarchy is inevitable.'

<sup>16</sup> R. T. Herford, *The Pharisees*, p. 91.

expression of the soul of Universal Israel. They are, therefore, in the historic forms of the traditional Liturgy ; and in Israel's sacred language, which is the storehouse of all the glories and sorrows, the divine discoveries, and eternal achievements of Israel. To-day, more than ever, is the knowledge of Hebrew indispensable to being a Jew. The apostles of Jewish religious revolution, like Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim and most of their followers, have been ' funeral-orators ' of the Hebrew language.<sup>17</sup> Not so the Jew who draws his inspiration from the Jewish past and who toils for the Jewish future. He refuses to remain ignorant of the sacred language of the Scriptures and the Synagogue, and rejoices at the glad tidings of its rebirth that resound from the hills and valleys of the Holy Land.<sup>18</sup> He sees in the rebirth of the Hebrew language an incontrovertible proof of the deathless vitality of the Hebrew People,<sup>19</sup> and he

<sup>17</sup> It is characteristic that not a word of Hebrew was spoken at the service in connexion with the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the local Liberal Synagogue.

<sup>18</sup> ' The Hebrew language is another of the original and distinctive forces of the Jewish People. What a mockery to think that a creative people should not be eager to know its mighty Torah in the majestic, beauteous language in which this Torah is written. A language is the garb in which a people clothes itself ; and Hebrew is a princely raiment. A language is the voice which sings from eternity in a people's heart ; and in the Hebrew we hear the earliest singing of the morning stars together.'—(Dr. J. L. Magnes.)

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translates his joy into *active help towards the resurrection of Israel in Eretz Yisrael*.

None should more eagerly toil for the Jewish future than the English Jew. In his eyes, it should be a special privilege to participate in the creation of the Jewish National Home, first proclaimed by Great Britain and now part of the Law of Nations. The old Rabbis tell us that every generation which has not seen the rebuilding of the Temple is as if it had seen its destruction. In the same way, the truth is dawning upon us Jews of England, that if we shut our souls to the Divine significance of the world-historical events which we have been deemed worthy to witness, and fail to take our share in the rebuilding of Zion, it is as if we had seen its ruin. 'Happy is he,' sang Yehudah Halevi, eight hundred years ago, in his immortal *Ode to Zion*,

'Happy is he that watches, drawing near  
 Until he sees thy glorious lights arise,  
 And over whom thy dawn breaks full and clear,  
 Set in the Orient skies.  
 But happiest he who, with exultant eyes,  
 The bliss of thy redeemed ones shall behold,  
 And see thy youth renewed as in the days of old.'<sup>20</sup>

Zion is the heart and conscience of Israel. A rebuilt Zion, the visible symbol of the unity of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, would once more make Israel the heart and conscience of mankind. May it be given us to hasten the realization of that Messianic vision. Amen.

enslaved people is true to its language', says a noted French writer, 'it holds within its hands the key of its prison-house.'

<sup>20</sup> Mrs. Henry Lucas's noble version, *The Jewish Year*, p. 133; quoted in *A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 222.

## IX

### THE IMITATION OF GOD

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Mishpatim 5687*

*29 January 1927, at the New West End*

*Synagogue, London.*

ד' ד' אל רחום וחנן ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת  
נצר חסד לאלפים נשא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקה

*'The Lord, the Lord, God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving-kindness and truth; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and acquitting the penitent.'* Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7.

AFTER Israel had danced before the Golden Calf, and the first Tables of the Law lay shattered at the foot of Sinai, Moses again ascended the mountain and prostrated himself in prayer before God. 'I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,' he entreated. 'Thou canst not see My face'—man cannot see God and live—is the answer to his prayer; 'I will make all My goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee. And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed: The Lord, the Lord, God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in loving-kindness and truth; keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and acquitting the penitent'.<sup>1</sup> With shining face, Moses descends from the mountain. He returns unto Israel with the Tables of the old Law; but, in addition,

<sup>1</sup> Exodus xxxiii. 18-20; xxxiv. 5-7. The translation, 'and acquitting the penitent', is based on Talm. Yoma 86a.



he brings a Heavenly commentary on that Law, this new Vision in which the white radiance of Divine love is broken into thirteen different colours, these thirteen attributes of the Divine Nature, each of them a synonym of the everlasting mercy of God.

Judaism has been very chary of definitions of God. He is the *En Sof*, the Infinite, the Undefinable, yea, the Unknowable. *אם ידעתי הייתי* 'If I could comprehend Him, I should myself be Divine', is a well-known Hebrew saying.<sup>2</sup> And yet in the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, Scripture gives us such a definition of God. Furthermore, all schools of Jewish thought agree that this sublime revelation expresses the essence of the Jewish God-conception;<sup>3</sup> and that it enshrines some of the most distinctive doctrines of Judaism.

The very opening of this unique description of the Godhead, the words *Adonoy, Adonoy*, signifying literally 'the Lord is the Lord', state such a distinctive doctrine of Judaism. They emphasize, the Rabbis declare, the absolute unchangeableness of God, as if to say: *אני ד' קודם שיחטא האדם ואני ד' לאחר שיחטא האדם ויעשה תשובה* 'I am the Lord before a man has sinned, and am the Lord after a man has sinned and has sought repentance'<sup>4</sup>—ever a merciful and gracious God, forgiving iniquity,

<sup>2</sup> Albo, *Ikkarim*, ii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> The verses containing the Thirteen Attributes became the dominant refrain in the penitential prayers of the Solemn Season. In some of the synagogue hymns, the Thirteen Attributes were personified, and were invoked as angelic beings—to the scandal of prosy literalists. At the request of several of the Constituent Synagogues, Chief Rabbi Dr. Nathan Adler, in 1880, consented to modify these invocations, including one of the Neilah hymns.

<sup>4</sup> Talm. Rosh Hashanah 17 b.

transgression, and sin. In non-Jewish doctrines of atonement, it is not man so much who is to be brought back to God, as it is the angry God who is to be propitiated. Quite other is the teaching of Judaism. The change to be wrought, it holds, is not in the nature of the Deity. He is the same after a man has sinned as He was before a man has sinned. The change to be wrought is in the heart of man. 'Let the wicked forsake his way', exclaims the Prophet,<sup>5</sup> 'and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have compassion upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.' *He* forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin, acquitting the penitent.

ונקה 'Acquitting the penitent' is the last of the Thirteen Attributes. This carries an obvious corollary with it: He does not acquit the impenitent.<sup>6</sup> מנקה הוא לשבים ואינו מנקה לאינם שבים. He is merciful and gracious and forgiving: but He will never obliterate the eternal and unbridgeable distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between light and darkness, between good and evil. Sin drags suffering with it, and crime is surely followed by misery to self and others. Thus, and thus only, erring men and women by their own bitter experience at last come to see the folly as well as the wickedness of evil.

'We do not what we ought,  
What we ought not, we do;  
And lean upon the thought  
That chance will bring us through;  
But our own acts, for good or ill, are mightier powers.'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah lv. 7, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Talm. Yoma 86 a.

<sup>7</sup> M. Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna*.

The unfailing and impartial consequences of sin help us perceive that there is no 'chance' in morals; and Judaism, the embodiment of *all* the Thirteen Attributes, teaches that God is seemingly cruel in order to be everlastingly kind; that the punishments of sin are not vindictive, but remedial. Verily, in the words of the Psalmist,<sup>8</sup> 'the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether' משפטי ד' אמת צדקו יחדו.

But it is these Thirteen Attributes as a whole that gave rise to the sublime principle of the *Imitation of God*<sup>9</sup> הרבקות במדותיו של הקב"ה. This Jewish ideal, 'one of the most advanced triumphs of Religion', goes back to the beginnings of Judaism. 'Holy shall ye be, for holy am I the Lord your God',<sup>10</sup> is the divine demand of the Torah. Israel is not only to serve God, but imitate Him. Mortal man, however, cannot imitate God's infinity, omnipotence or eternity. That side of His nature, which is beyond human comprehension is also beyond human imitation. But we *can* know His 'goodness', and we can follow His ways of mercy and forgiveness. Thus, pity is a divine attribute, and man is never nearer to the Divine than in his compassionate moments. 'Even as I am merciful, be

<sup>8</sup> Psalm xix. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. Schechter seems to be the author of this term, and Chapter XIII of his *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* is the best treatment of the subject. See also I. Abrahams in *Jewish Addresses*, pp. 41-51; his *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, I and II; and Hermann Cohen's classical essay, *Liebe und Gerechtigkeit in den Begriffen Gott und Mensch*.

<sup>10</sup> Leviticus xix. 2.

thou merciful; even as I am gracious, be thou gracious',<sup>11</sup> is Abba Saul's translation of the great commandment of the Imitation of God. His merciful qualities are, therefore, the only real links between God and man. והתקדשתם 'Sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy';<sup>12</sup> i.e. strive after holiness, and your very striving is such holiness; for God, the source of all holiness, has so ordered it that wherever men and women honestly strive after holy living, such striving carries its own fulfilment with it.<sup>13</sup> The ideal of the Imitation of God became the loftiest possible motive to humaneness and charity in Israel. It made each Jew, in rabbinic phrase, a co-worker with God in the creation of the moral universe.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> In Sifre 85 a; in Seder Eliyahu Rabba, he is reported as follows:—

'As the way of Heaven is that He is ever merciful towards the wicked and accepts their repentance, so be ye merciful towards each other. As He bestows gifts on those who know Him and those who know Him not and deserve not His gifts, so bestow ye gifts upon each other.'

'The whole Rabbinic literature might be searched in vain for a single instance of the sterner of the Old Testament attributes of God being set up as a model for a man to copy.'—I. Abrahams. Cf. Schechter, *Aspects*, p. 204.

<sup>12</sup> Leviticus xi. 44.

<sup>13</sup> 'Because the moral is divine, ye shall be moral; and because the divine is moral, ye shall become like unto God in His ethical attributes. This is the ultimate purpose of human life.'—M. Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism*, i. 113.

<sup>14</sup> 'As we follow the Divine Pattern of holiness, all that we have and are, body and soul, weal and woe, wealth and want, pain and pleasure, life and death, become stepping-stones on the road to holiness and godliness. Life is like a ladder on which man can

The *Imitatio Dei*, the imitation of God's merciful qualities, may indeed be said to be the distinguishing characteristic of Jewish civilization whether in ancient, medieval or modern times. In our Sacred Scriptures, the one unpardonable sin is held to be man's inhumanity to man. 'Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child,' is a typical law of the Torah. Not only does the Torah require justice to the poor, but chivalry to the poor, coupled with respect for his human personality.<sup>15</sup> 'Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. . . . The Lord your God doth execute justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loveth the stranger; *love ye, therefore, the stranger.*'<sup>16</sup> Love of the alien is something unknown in ancient times; and is universally unheeded in modern times. Huxley, the great rationalist, declared: 'There is no code of legislation, ancient or modern, at once so just and so merciful, so tender to the weak and poor, as the Jewish Law'.<sup>17</sup>

rise from round to round, to come ever nearer to God on high who beckons him towards ever higher ideals and achievements.'—K. Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, p. 491.

<sup>15</sup> 'Even finer than the humanitarianism of the laws is their noble respect for human personality . . . it shows most finely, because most simply, in the direction: "When thou dost lend thy neighbour any manner of loan, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge". For every Israelite, however poor, has the right to invite into or exclude from the four walls of the cabin he calls his home.'—Prof. A. C. Welch, *The Code of Deuteronomy*, p. 215.

<sup>16</sup> Exodus xxii. 20, 21; Deuteronomy x, 18, 19. There is not a trace of such laws or admonitions in the Code of Hammurabi, with which Bible critics love to compare the Torah.

<sup>17</sup> 'But not only to man does the humanitarianism of the Torah

This spirit of mercy and tenderness is not confined to the Torah. The seers and sages of Israel were worthy followers of Moses, and loyal expounders of the Mosaic Teaching and Tradition. It has been well said that the Prophets of Israel were dumbfounded at human ferocity as at something against nature and reason. Sacrifice and prayer, if unaccompanied by pity, were in their eyes little short of blasphemy. True atonement, says Isaiah<sup>18</sup> in words that the Synagogue ordained to be the Prophetical Reading on Yom Kippur: 'Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh?' The Psalmist could boast: 'נער הייתי גם זקנתי ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב וזרעו מבקש לחם' I have

extend; it cares for the brute as well, and places it likewise under legal protection, to which I know of no analogy in older extra-Israelitish codes. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn." The brute should not perform hard labour, and at the same time have food before its eyes without the possibility of eating therefrom. I remember some time ago to have read that one of the richest Italian estate-owners fastened iron muzzles to his miserable, fever-stricken workmen at the grape-harvest, so that it might not occur to these poor peasants, working for starvation wages under the glowing sun of Southern Italy, to satiate their burning thirst and their gnawing hunger with a few of the millions of grapes of the owner.—C. H. Cornill.

The Rev. M. Joseph rightly says that outside Judaism, e.g. the Church Fathers, the notion of duty to animals was contemptuously dismissed as an idle sentimentalism.

'In the range and circle of duties inculcated by the early Fathers, those to animals had no place.'—Lecky.

<sup>18</sup> Isaiah lviii. 7; Proverbs xiv. 31: 'He that oppreseth the poor blasphemeth his Maker.'

been young and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging for bread.’<sup>19</sup> Many years ago, a well-known Liberal ‘rabbi’ who had publicly left Judaism, made the ironic comment on this verse that the experience of the Psalmist must have been extremely limited. He forgot, however, that the Psalmist was thinking of, and moved in, a Jewish universe; and that in no Jewish community was the innocent victim of adverse circumstances, or his orphan child, ever allowed to go under without a helping hand being extended to him.

The loftiest heights, however, in the preaching of pity and all-embracing humanity were attained by the Pharisees. ‘The three pillars of the moral universe’, said Simon the Just, ‘were Torah, Worship, and Charity.’<sup>20</sup> גמילות חסדים, the bestowal of loving-kindnesses—clothing the naked, nursing the sick, comforting those that mourn, burying the dead—is thus placed on the same level as the study of the Torah and the Temple service. After the fall of the Temple, devastating and paralysing was the despair of Israel’s faithful sons. Johanan ben Zakkai, the rescuer of Judaism from the shipwreck of Roman destruction, bade them, however, take courage and refrain from grief. ‘We have another means of expiation equally efficacious left unto us—גמילות חסדים, the bestowal of loving-kindnesses upon our fellow-men.’<sup>21</sup> The Rabbis pointed out that the Torah from beginning to end preached the bestowal of loving-kindnesses, תורה תחלתה ג’ח וסופה ג’ח;<sup>22</sup> and they denied that any one

<sup>19</sup> Psalm xxxvii. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Ethics of the Fathers, i. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Aboth d’ Rabbi Nathan, c. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Talm. Sota 14 a.

who was devoid of pity could be a true descendant of Abraham.<sup>23</sup>

The history of Jewish philanthropy is a difficult subject that still awaits the great scholar who can do adequate justice to it. In all probability, the hospital is a Jewish contribution to human civilization.<sup>24</sup> And insufficient though the records that have come down to us be, we are yet enabled to declare that, as in Biblical and Talmudic times, so in the Dark and the Middle Ages, down to and including our own day, the Jew's passion for pity remained unabated. Moreover, the charity of the Jew did not degrade. It had that religious touch which sanctifies the giver, and that delicacy of feeling which elevates the recipient.

The last half-century brought Jewry face to face with problems of Jewish misery on an unheard-of scale ; with the task of alleviating the suffering of millions of tortured and hunted human beings. Western Israel rose to the occasion. Especially do the activities of the American and South African Jews for the relief of the Jewish victims of the War and After prove that modern Israel still 'loves loving-kindness'.<sup>25</sup> Their achievement stands, indeed, unparalleled in the history of philanthropic endeavour, and should hearten every Jew. So long as Jews are capable of showing such unquenchable generosity, the soul of Jewry is sound, and Israel still walks with God.

With this brief exposition of the Imitation of God in the life and story of Israel, I conclude this series of

<sup>23</sup> Talm. Bezaḥ 32 b.

<sup>24</sup> See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 'Hospital'.

<sup>25</sup> Micah vi. 8 ; אהבת חסד זו גמילות חסדים, Talm. Sukkah 49 b.



pulpit addresses. My starting-point was the Unity of God, Israel's great proclamation to mankind. I then dealt with the Revelation at Mount Sinai and humanity's eternal need of Divine sanction for the moral law, as well as with the concept of Jewish civilization that dates back to the Fathers and Mothers of the Hebrew race. In my third address, I showed the historical truth and authenticity of the Five Books of the Torah. These three—the Unity of God, Revelation, and the Torah—are the foundation on which that religious system which the world calls Judaism is built. I surveyed the structure that arose on that foundation—the Jewish Life, and the Holiness of Home. I defined the aim and scope of Jewish Religious Education, and examined the spiritual cements which bind the dispersed members of the House of Israel into a Brotherhood that is bidden to make the All-merciful its pattern and inspiration.

*'This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.'*<sup>26</sup> It is said that these verses at one time formed the epilogue to the entire Hebrew Bible.<sup>27</sup> They are certainly the epilogue of that

<sup>26</sup> Ecclesiastes xii. 13, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Graetz, Jost and Renan adopt Nachman Krochmal's conjecture as to the meaning and purpose of the epilogue in Koheleth (*More Nebuche Hazeman*, chap. xi. 8). Cheyne rejects this, apparently without having even read Krochmal. In his *Job and Solomon* (p. 232) he speaks of 'the Hebrew Journal, *More Nebuche Hazeman*!' His faithful follower, the late S. R. Driver, in the earlier

examination of Jewish fundamentals which I began in this Synagogue over a year ago under the name of 'The New Paths', and continued in nine further addresses on the 'Affirmations of Judaism'.

'*Fear God and keep His commandments.*' The feeling which in the language of religion is called the 'fear of God' will be the trembling of a terrified slave or it will be rapt and loving reverence—all according to our conception of the Divine. The sublime revelation of the Thirteen Merciful Attributes which we considered to-day must fill our souls with a new loyalty to God and His commandments. Standing on the *terra firma* of Israel's Law, we exclaim with a leading modern Jew: <sup>28</sup>

'I will continue to hold my banner aloft. I find myself born—ay, born!—into a people and a religion. The preservation of my people must be for a purpose, for God does nothing without a purpose. His reasons are unfathomable to me, but on my own reason I place

editions of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (p. 448), betters his master's instruction in the following comment on Krochmal's theory: 'Jewish scholars are often exceedingly clever and learned; but they are somewhat apt to see things in a false perspective, and to build upon superficial and *accidental* appearance, extravagant and far-reaching hypotheses'. It would have been nearer the truth if he had said:

Christian scholars on Jewish questions are often exceedingly clever; but, owing to their imperfect acquaintance and their 'imperfect sympathies' with the subject, they are apt to be colour-blind in matters Jewish; or to see things in a false perspective, and to build upon superficial and accidental appearance, extravagant and far-reaching hypotheses, dishonourable to Judaism.

<sup>28</sup> Dr. Cyrus Adler. This was written in 1894 in connexion with Josephine Lazarus's attempt to evaporate the whole body of Jewish doctrine and observance into a few rhapsodies over the Gospels and the Epistles of Paul.

little dependence; test it where I will, it fails me. The simple, the ultimate in every direction is sealed to me. It is as difficult to understand matter as mind. The courses of the planets are no harder to explain than the growth of a blade of grass. Therefore am I willing to remain a link in the great chain. What has been preserved for four thousand years was not saved that I should overthrow it. My people have survived the prehistoric paganism, the Babylonian Polytheism, the aesthetic Hellenism, the sagacious Romanism, at once the blandishments and the persecutions of the Church; and it will survive the modern dilettantism and the current materialism, holding aloft the traditional Jewish ideals inflexibly until the world shall become capable of recognizing their worth.'

*'For God shall bring every work into judgment.'* Our ancient Teachers raised these words into a mighty ethical lever in human life. On the Judgment Day, they tell us, every man will be asked: <sup>29</sup> נשאל ונתת באמונה 'Have thy dealings with thy fellow men been at the price of thy Faith?' <sup>30</sup> קבעת עתים לתורה 'Didst thou fix times for the study of the Torah?' עסקת בפריה ורביה 'Didst thou found a family?' צפית לישועה 'Didst thou hope for the salvation of Israel?' My addresses will have altogether failed in their purpose unless they lead some of their hearers, some of their readers, to ask themselves these questions long before the Judgment Day. Has our advance in life been at the sacrifice of Sabbath and Festival, of religious life and observance? Have we, by word and deed, succeeded in deepening Jewish consciousness, Jewish self-respect, Jewish conviction? Have we exemplified the Jewish ideal of the Holiness of Home? Have we hoped for the salvation of Israel; or have we, at least, helped in the salvaging of Israel

<sup>29</sup> Talm. Sabbath 31 a.

<sup>30</sup> בְּנִפְשׁוֹ יָבִיא לְחַמּוֹ, 'at the price of', like בְּנִפְשׁוֹ. Cf. Genesis xxix. 18.

during the last ten terrible years in the hate and hunger zones of Eastern Europe ?

Let my last word be : Whenever we overcome callousness to human misery, whenever Jewish brotherhood, human brotherhood, moves us to deeds of pity and beneficence, we *imitate God*, we experience eternity in this life,<sup>31</sup> and enrol our names among the true children of Him who revealed Himself unto Moses in the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. Amen.

<sup>31</sup> Rabbi Jacob said : ' Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come ; and better is one hour of blissfulness of spirit in the world to come than the whole life of this world '.—Ethics of the Fathers, iii. 22.



THE NEW PATHS:  
WHITHER DO THEY LEAD?



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I

*Sermon preached on the First Day of Chanukah 5686,  
12 December 1925, at the New West End  
Synagogue, London.*

עת לעשות לך' הפרו תורתך

*It is time to act for the Lord: they have made void thy Law.—  
Psalm cxix. 126.*

מאי חנוכה 'What is Chanukah?' is a familiar question of the Rabbis. What is the occasion in Israel's past that called it forth, they asked,<sup>1</sup> and what is its ethical and spiritual purpose in the scheme of Israel's life? We, too, might well ask מאי חנוכה 'What is Chanukah?' Jewish history, we are told, has its message and lesson for each age and every generation. What is the message and the lesson that this beautiful Festival of Lights has for us, Jews and Jewesses of the British Empire?

That message and lesson are plain, writ in large letters to all who will but heed. Whosoever reads the Books of Maccabees cannot fail to note something that recurs over and over again in later Jewish annals. On the one hand, these ancient books tell of the eagerness displayed by the upper classes in Jerusalem, 2,000 years ago, to abandon Torah, Sabbath, and Covenant in their desire to be as if they were not among the nations. They became Hellenized not only in outward things, but in

<sup>1</sup> Talm. Sabbath 21 b.



thought and life as well. Even in the ranks of the priesthood, 'many were making of no account the honours of their fathers, and thinking the glories of the Greeks the best of all'.<sup>2</sup> The utter lack of sympathy of some Jews to-day with things Jewish, and their exaggerated deference, as a Quarterly Reviewer once put it, to the superficial customs of their non-Jewish neighbours, is thus no new phenomenon. — בימים ההם — בזמן הזה

On the other hand, these same books have preserved for us the immortal memory of men of divine steadfastness, to whom the Torah was dearer than life itself, who were 'ready either to live or die nobly' in its defence,<sup>3</sup> men of sublime heroism, pure and righteous men, צדיקים and מטהורים who were fully worthy of the Redemption that was wrought through them. 'If all the nations in the king's dominions fall away each one from the worship of his fathers, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers',<sup>4</sup> is the soul-stirring reply of Mattathias the Hasmonean to the representative of the Syrian king who would seduce him from his faith.

It is not difficult to see that we too are witnesses of a fundamentally similar spiritual conflict in Anglo-Jewry to-day. This clash between the forces that cherish our Jewish heritage and those that would break away into religious adventures recalling the aberrations in Maccabean times, is an undoubted fact. This fact must be openly faced. And, as ever, the first defensive step against this new Hellenism is neither to mock nor denounce nor even to lament it, but to *understand* it;

<sup>2</sup> 2 Maccabees iv. 15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Maccabees iv. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. ii. 19.

that is, to consider it in the light of history, and fully realize its fatal consequences to Jewry and Judaism.

Six years ago it was my privilege to expound from this pulpit the conception of Traditional Judaism, the Judaism of the overwhelming majority of the Jews of Great and Greater Britain. I then defined Traditional Judaism as :

‘ The teachings and practices which have come down to the House of Israel through the ages ; the positive Jewish beliefs concerning God, the Torah, and Israel ; the sacred Festivals ; the holy resolve to maintain Israel’s identity ; and the life consecrated by Jewish observances—all of these in indissoluble union with the best thought and culture of our times and with utmost loyalty to King and Country.’

To-day, it is my sorrowful duty to speak to you of a Jewish school of thought whose position on many of the fundamentals just enumerated is diametrically opposed to the Judaism of our fathers. This school of thought originated nearly a hundred years ago in Germany, and is generally known in this country as Liberal Judaism. Till quite recently, its leading representatives, through whose writings and doings it can alone be understood—Holdheim, Geiger, Kohler, I. M. Wise, and Emil Hirsch—have been Germans. Despite this fact, it did not make much headway in Germany. It was otherwise in America, till the establishment of the New York Theological Seminary, the rise of Zionism, and the Americanization of the Eastern European immigrants. These factors definitely arrested its progress in that country. In England, a small group of London religious Liberals has long been struggling to transplant this German-American mutation of Judaism to these shores. After

many years of effort, they have erected a stately house of worship. So loud is their rejoicing thereat, that earnest men and women are perplexed by the claims of this movement. They are dazzled by its ephemeral successes, and bewildered by the new shibboleths of its spokesmen. They turn their eyes to the Rabbinate for guidance. This guidance will be given them. My illustrious predecessor ב"ר was faced with a similar duty twenty-three years ago, when this movement first began as the Jewish Religious Union. He then said :

‘An earnest appeal has been addressed to me by many members of the community, to state my views touching the services which are being held at present under the direction of the new Religious Union. And charged, as I am, with a large measure of responsibility for the religious well-being of Anglo-Jewry, I dare not shrink from this task, however painful it may prove.’<sup>5</sup>

I too dare not shrink from the painful duty confronting me ; and shall begin to-day a brief examination of Liberal Judaism’s attitude towards institutions and beliefs that are essential to Israel’s existence, in order to unveil its true nature and show whither Liberal Judaism is leading.

We will begin with the institutions, and take a primal commandment like the Abrahamic Covenant. Infinite has been its significance and influence in Israel’s life. The Maccabean martyrs died for it. The officers of King Antiochus—the chronicler tells us—put to death the mothers who initiated their children into the Covenant

<sup>5</sup> Chief Rabbi Dr. H. Adler, *The Old Paths*, a sermon preached in the St. John’s Wood Synagogue, 6 December 1902.

—‘and they hanged their babes about their necks’.<sup>6</sup> The same readiness for self-immolation in defence of this sacred rite is found in the times of the Hadrianic persecution, in the dread days of the Inquisition, yea, whenever or wherever tyrants undertook to uproot the Jewish faith. Even an excommunicated semi-apostate like Benedict Spinoza declares: ‘Such great importance do I attach to the sign of the Covenant, that I am persuaded that it is sufficient by itself to maintain the separate existence of the nation for ever.’<sup>7</sup> In striking contrast with the unbounded devotion of Universal Israel to this vital institution, the apostles of Liberal Judaism have everywhere worked for its total abolition. Abraham Geiger, the founder of the whole movement, denounced מילה as far back as 1845.<sup>8</sup> His disciple Emil Hirsch, of Chicago, who in his day was probably the most influential Jewish preacher in the world, boasted that a growing number of his followers resisted their Zipporahs and omitted to make their children sons of the Covenant.<sup>9</sup> Nearly all the guides of this new Judaism to-day are in agreement with these views of Geiger and Hirsch. They dispense with the Abrahamic rite in the case of proselytes;<sup>10</sup> but they find it advisable to retain it in the case of infants ‘for an indefinite period of

<sup>6</sup> 1 Maccabees i. 61.

<sup>7</sup> *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, iii. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, v. 181.

<sup>9</sup> In 1885 his congregation resolved: ‘That the Abrahamic rite is not an essential condition, the compliance with which must precede or follow admittance to membership in Sinai congregation.’ D. Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, p. 501.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution of the Annual Conference of American Liberal Rabbis in 1892. This is also the practice of the local Liberals.

*transition*', as the principal founder of the London group carefully and officially phrased it in 1909.<sup>11</sup> This distinction between proselytes and infants seems also to have obtained in the early Christian Church; but after מילה was once set aside in the case of proselytes, it was not long 'retained' even for infants. With open eyes, Liberal Judaism is repeating the experience of early Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

Let us now take the Sacred Days of the Jewish year, those embodiments of all the great ideals that Judaism has to teach the world, and see the place which they hold

<sup>11</sup> C. G. Montefiore in *The Jewish Religious Union: Its Principles and its Future*, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> See my reply to Canon Lukyn Williams, in *Jewish Chronicle*, 1 January 1926. Acts xv. 1-5 shows that at the very first, proselytes were expected to undergo circumcision. Paul, when he started on his missionary career, circumcises Timothy (Acts xvi. 3). But he soon gives up this position; and even the leaders of the Judaistic party agree with him. It was different in regard to infants; and only after the year 116 did all Jewish observance cease in the Church (Joël, *Blicke*, i. 16-42).

Canon Lukyn Williams, in his second letter (*Jewish Chronicle*, 8 January 1926), naïvely states the real reason why Paul circumcised Timothy: Paul's ministry and propaganda would otherwise have suffered! A similar *opportunism* characterizes the religious policy and activities of Paul's Anglo-Jewish disciples to-day. Here is Mr. Montefiore's official declaration on circumcision (the italics are mine):

'There is one ceremonial and institution which stands by itself. It does not harmonize with our own existing religious ideas, and yet I think that we should all desire to retain it *for the present*. I refer to the rite of circumcision. We think that its maintenance *for an indefinite period of transition* is probably quite desirable. I need not give any reasons here. *Sufficient to say that they are reasons of expediency.*'—*The Jewish Religious Union: Its Principles, &c.*, p. 18.

in the Liberal Jewish consciousness. Sabbath and Holy Convocation, Fast and Festival, fare ill at the hands of these moderns. One prominent religious guide advocated that Passover be struck off the Jewish Calendar, and proposed that, instead, Christian and Jew should together celebrate Easter under the name of 'Martyrs' Day', whatever that may mean;<sup>13</sup> another argued that Tabernacles was a dying festival, a withered branch that should be cut off from the Tree of Judaism;<sup>14</sup> while still another has arranged in his synagogue that these two festivals be celebrated only on the Sunday of the week in which they occur.<sup>15</sup> Many of these 'rabbis' (for some mysterious reason, men who are devoid of rabbinic knowledge, and have definitely broken with rabbinic teaching, insist on assuming this title) declare that fasting on the Day of Atonement is a superstition; and they practise what they preach. One of them has gone farther. He has started an agitation to do away with *Yom Kippur* itself.<sup>16</sup>

The Ninth of Ab is the day on which Jerusalem and

<sup>13</sup> The late Dr. J. Krauskopf, Philadelphia. <sup>14</sup> Dr. Emil Hirsch.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Stephen Wise: see his interview in *The Jewish Chronicle*, 4 March 1910. The celebration of Pentecost is often *ante-dated* by American 'rabbis', sometimes for most trivial reasons.

<sup>16</sup> *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 4 January 1924:

'Rabbi who would abolish *Yom Kippur*.'

In a sermon on the question 'Is the Younger Generation Godless?' Rabbi J. Max Weis, of the Heights Free Synagogue, New York, appealed for the abolition of *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, on the ground that 'it makes for hypocrisy and fails to touch the consciences of men. It is one of the last remnants of our outworn institutions in the Jewish Faith. It is outworn and valueless, and weighted with gloominess.'

the Temple were twice taken and destroyed by the enemy, and commemorates what has well been called the crucifixion of the Jewish nation by the Romans. The eve of *Tisha b'Av*, the hour when in sorrow and anguish the House of Israel has for 1,800 years and longer read the Lamentations of Jeremiah, is not infrequently selected for dances and balls by American Liberal congregations.<sup>17</sup>

And what of the Sabbath Day, the Sabbath of the Decalogue, that veritable pillar of fire in the soul-life of the Jew? It is nearly eighty years since Holdheim's *Reform-Gemeinde* at Berlin started with services both on Saturdays and Sundays.<sup>18</sup> It soon abandoned the Saturday services altogether and adopted the Christian day of rest as its own. Several American ministers have succeeded in inducing their congregations to follow the Berlin example and to discontinue religious service on the Jewish Sabbath.

'I am the only good Jew among all the Chicago *rabbonim*,' Emil Hirsch used to say; 'I "close" on

<sup>17</sup> The Atlantic City (N.J.) Liberal congregation was the first to do so, some time in the nineties of the last century.

When Louis XVI removed some of the disabilities from the Sephardi Jews, a Bordeaux enthusiast exclaimed: 'France is our Zion, and Louis XVI our Messiah.' Isaac M. Wise, the Father of American Liberal Judaism, is responsible for the slogan: 'America is our Zion, and George Washington our Messiah.' The preacher of the Berlin Sunday-Sabbath synagogue likewise published a sermon entitled, 'Kaiser Wilhelm, ein Messias unserer Zeit' ('Kaiser William I, a Messiah of our Age').

<sup>18</sup> 'It started in 1845, with services on Saturday and on Sunday. The Saturday services were discontinued in 1849.' David Philipson, in *Jewish Encyclopedia*, viii. 357.

*Shabbos.* 'The Sabbath of the Jew is dead,' he proclaimed from his pulpit; 'let us bury it. The Sunday must squarely and openly be made the Sabbath.'<sup>19</sup>

The latter ideal, that is, to make Sunday the Sabbath of the Jew, is the real objective of most Liberal leaders. In communities where there is still strong Jewish feeling, and considerable opposition would be shown to an open transfer of the Sabbath to the Christian day of rest, the Sunday service is at first represented as *supplementary*, and as intended only for those Jews who will not, or cannot, attend on Saturdays. History tells us that the Jewish Christians likewise observed both Saturday and Sunday. But, as in every revolution, whether political or religious, it was the radical party, which desired a complete break with Judaism, that proved victorious in the Church. Not only was Sunday declared to be the Christian Sabbath, but in time there was direct condemnation of those who, besides Sunday, still kept the Jewish day.<sup>20</sup> When, in addition to this historical warning, we reflect that no modern religious community can possibly expect its adherents to observe two Sabbaths in one week, it is easy to see whither Liberal Jews are being piloted.

We have learnt what this new school has to say on the Sacred Festivals of Judaism and the rite of the Covenant. We readily grant that ours is not yet an exhaustive review of its religious position. Institutions, symbols, and observances constitute merely the body of Judaism. The mind and soul of Judaism are the Sacred

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Meldola de Sola, *Jewish Ministers?* p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> W. Robertson Smith, 'Sabbath', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, xxiii. 960.



Scriptures; the Brotherhood of Israel; the Jewish creed and outlook. And it is only when we shall know the Liberal attitude toward these—which, with the help of God, I shall attempt to give on future Sabbaths—that a just estimate will be possible.

In the meantime, let us remember, that in this world mind exists only in the habitation of a body; and that נשמות ערמילאין 'nude souls' are found only in the imagination of the medieval Mystics. No religion, least of all Judaism, can exist without its historic, outward garb. In ancient times, sincere friends of Judaism, like Philo of Alexandria and his school, attempted to explain away the forms and institutions of Judaism as mere symbols of philosophic truths. They left their followers nothing to live by and nothing to die for; and both teachers and taught soon disappeared, totally, from the arena of Jewish history into the wide-opened jaws of the Church. And in our own day, advanced Jewish thinkers confess that when the framework of rabbinical Law falls away, when the immemorial rites, customs, and ceremonies go, 'for the most part we are left without God in our lives. We lose the sense of divine things—the touch of the spirit—and, therefore, our spiritual life becomes barren and exhausted. We remain an ethical people, but we cease to be a religious people.'<sup>21</sup>

May the God of our fathers שבראנו לכבודו והבדילנו מן התועים, 'who hath created us for His glory and separated us from those that go astray', speak to us through Chanukah and preserve us from such exhaustion of the soul. May the lights of this Festival illumine our minds with

<sup>21</sup> *The Spirit of Judaism*, p. 116, by Josephine Lazarus—the Liberal sister of Emma Lazarus, the 'Mother of Zionism'.

the proud knowledge that He hath given us the Law of Truth and thereby planted everlasting life in our midst—  
אשר נתן לנו תורת אמת וחיי עולם נמנע בחובנו. May He cause the Maccabean spirit to be reborn in our midst. Then shall none labour unto vanity, none toil unto revolt and moral confusion. Even as those God-inspired heroes in their day, shall we too vindicate the truth and hasten the triumph of Israel's ideals of holiness and righteousness on earth. Amen.

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THE NEW PATHS :  
WHITHER DO THEY LEAD ?

II

*Sermon preached on the Eighth Day of Chanukah 5686,  
19 December 1925, at the Hampstead Synagogue,  
London.*

כה אמר ד' עמדו על דרכים וראו ושאלו לנתבות עולם אי זה דרך  
הטוב ולכו בה ומצאו מרגוע לנפשכם.

*Thus saith the Lord: Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the  
old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find  
rest for your souls.—Jeremiah vi. 16.*

‘The New Paths: Whither Do They Lead?’ Under this title I examined last week in a sister-synagogue the novel religious adventures that have been undertaken by a small group in this country. For the guidance of those who are misled into thinking these New Paths to be identical, in all essentials, with the Old Paths of which the Prophet speaks, the *נתבות עולם* that have been tried and trodden by Israel from the beginning, I gave a brief survey of the rise of this new movement in Germany and of its development and arrest in America. I recapitulated the views of its founders on fundamental Jewish laws and institutions, and pointed out whither such views and practices must lead to-day, even as they did 1,800 years ago; namely, out of Judaism

and ultimately into Christianity. The leading exponents of the new doctrine are hostile towards the Abrahamic Covenant, the Jewish Sabbath, and several of the Festivals; and are labouring for their abolition. They contemptuously brush aside as 'irksome legalism' and 'empty ceremonialism', all those precepts and customs that have cheered and sweetened the life of the Jew; that have steeled him to self-conquest; that have preserved him from destruction of body and degradation of mind; and have sanctified and transfigured existence for a hundred generations in Israel. In most Liberal communities, the Sabbath-light and the Passover *Saider*, the *Shofar*<sup>1</sup> and the *Lulav*, *Purim*<sup>2</sup> and *Tisha b'Av* have been swept away, together with all dietary and Passover laws, all family laws and laws of mourning. The Sacred Language has, to all intents and purposes, ceased to be their language of prayer; and the historic Liturgy is amputated beyond recognition, all references to Zion and the Restoration having been deleted for worshippers, who meet with uncovered head and without *Tallis*. And if in any of these synagogues the *Shofar* is still sounded, this or that Hebrew prayer still recited, or an observance like the *Saider* still commended, this is done not because it is in the Torah, not because it is the ordinance and usage of בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל Universal Israel, but because it is declared to be—sometimes for purely

<sup>1</sup> The *Shofar* was abolished in Berlin *Reform-Gemeinde* in 1845. Its example was followed by American Liberals, who, as a rule, sound a cornet instead of the ram's horn on *Rosh Hashanah*.

<sup>2</sup> *Purim* does not appear among the Festivals of the London Jewish Religious Union—possibly because there are no longer any Hamans in the world.

opportunist reasons—still ‘religiously expressive and helpful’. Which observance or ceremony, however, is to be so regarded, and for how long a period of transition it is to be retained, depend upon the passing mood of the congregation or the momentary whim of the ‘rabbi’.

Now, this uprooting of sacred immemorial institutions that are interwoven with the very existence of Israel is part of a system. It is the logical outcome of the rejection by these Jewish teachers of the binding character of the Torah and of the sacredness of the Scriptures. Over and over again have these moderns proclaimed their repudiation of Israel’s Law, and too often they have done so with a violence worthy of a Tom Paine. ‘The Jew’s religion’, wrote the President of the Liberal theological college at Cincinnati,<sup>3</sup> ‘is built not on the Bible nor on supernatural revelation. It rests neither on Moses nor on any authority. Must we still be cowed down by fear of the thunders of Sinai?’ ‘We discard the belief’, the late Dr. Krauskopf roundly declared,<sup>4</sup> ‘that the Bible was written by God, or by man at the dictation of God, and that its teachings are therefore binding.’ Crisp and uncompromising is the official declaration made on behalf of the London group: ‘We recognize no binding authority between us and God, whether in a man or in a book.’<sup>5</sup>

In a word, the action of the late Dr. Emil Hirsch in banishing the *Sepher Torah* from his synagogue is

<sup>3</sup> Dr. K. Kohler ; see Meldola de Sola, *Jewish Ministers?* p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> See *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Old Series, i. 398.

<sup>5</sup> C. G. Montefiore, *The Jewish Religious Union: Its Principles and its Future*, p. 12.

symbolical of the attitude of the whole movement towards the Torah.<sup>6</sup> All these religious radicals, whether they follow Dr. Hirsch's example or whether they still find place for an Ark and a *Sepher Torah* in their synagogue, proclaim that the Torah is no longer their guide of life; and boast of having emancipated themselves from what the Vice-President of the London Liberals calls 'the bondage to the Bible'. *The bondage to the Bible!* You will note that this is but an echo of Paul, the Christian apostle to the Gentiles, and his fierce preaching concerning 'the bondage to the Law'. And as in the case of Paul, together with the rejection of the binding character of the Torah and the discarding of the whole scheme of traditional Jewish life, goes the denial of Jewish nationhood, the disbelief in the Restoration of Israel, and the reduction of Judaism to the level of a sect; of a sect, moreover, that revolts against its own traditions, and has forgotten its own teachings; of a sect whose followers beat their breasts before the whole world and declare אָבֵל אֲנוּ וְאִבּוֹתֵינוּ חָטְאוּ 'Verily, we are in error, as our ancestors have ever been before us'.

Equally violent are the negations in regard to faith and belief. There is not a single principle of Judaism

<sup>6</sup> The following words of Professor W. M. Haffkine illumine the fatal consequences of such an attitude:

'Is there a Jewish community anywhere, however safely domiciled, which has relinquished the Torah for even one generation and has survived that separation? Those who forsake the Torah, bringing it into disrepute and weakening the hold it has on us, are working at the destruction of the brotherhood that cradled and sheltered their fathers and forefathers through all the vicissitudes of the bygone ages.'—*A Book of Jewish Thoughts*, Oxford edition, p. 214.

which some of their prominent leaders did not or do not assail. I wish to make it quite clear that there is less agreement among them on questions of creed than on matters of ceremonial non-observance. Expressions of cynical unbelief can be paralleled by warm affirmations in the realm of personal religion and the spiritual life. However, in a revolutionary movement like Liberal Judaism, the expressions of unbelief on the part of its spokesmen are at least as characteristic as the affirmations, and can on no account be passed over in silence. Especially so, as these denials are infinitely graver than the issues that were under discussion in London eighty years ago at the time of the Reform schism. Then, the English Reformers, apart from their negative attitude towards the Oral Law, lopped off a few branches from the Tree of Judaism; they abolished the Second Days, shortened the prayers, and introduced the triennial cycle. Now, German-American Liberals lay the axe at the very roots of the Tree itself: it is the existence of God, His revelation to Israel, and the immortality of the soul that are being doubted. At the Pittsburg Conference in 1885, when the creed of Liberal Judaism was being formulated, Dr. Emil Hirsch objected to the term Revelation. 'I myself do not believe in personal revelation, nor does my congregation in Chicago,' he exclaimed. He also denied the immortality of the soul.<sup>7</sup> In 1914, the preacher of the sermon at the Conference of American Liberal rabbis not only repudiated the Mission of Israel

<sup>7</sup> Meldola de Sola, *Jewish Ministers* ? pp. 5 and 6.

'There is no doubt that the doctrine of immortality has been a comfort to many people,' Emil Hirsch admitted; 'but such spiritual influences may fitly be compared to drugs and anaesthetics.'



and scoffed at Israel's history and martyrdom, but expressed his disbelief in God, the incumbency of the moral law, and the immortality of the soul.<sup>8</sup> It is quite true that his views were not shared by the conference; and that these cannot, therefore, be regarded as representative. But it is surely significant that this same preacher is still a member of that clerical body and is still in charge of a Liberal Jewish community.

The fact is, that teachings of this nature are neither altogether exceptional nor are they on the decrease. Only last year, a young American radical, who is hailed in some quarters as a Jewish Martin Luther, published a book on Liberal Judaism, in which he writes that he is not prepared unhesitatingly to declare that God exists or that there is a life after death.<sup>9</sup> He ridicules the idea that a religion need perpetuate itself, and denies its right to demand sacrifice from its followers—such as abstaining from intermarriage—in order to perpetuate itself.<sup>10</sup> He is a Liberal of the second generation. Evidently, the New Paths do not lead to any deep faith and noble self-sacrifice on the part of the younger men and women. His father, Dr. Stephen Wise who,

<sup>8</sup> *Central Conference of American Rabbis*, vol. xxiv. Conference Sermon by 'Rabbi' M. P. Jacobson, pp. 246-59.

<sup>9</sup> James W. Wise, *Liberalising Liberal Judaism*, pp. 49, 92-3. James Wise has preached in the pulpit of the London Liberal synagogue.

<sup>10</sup> 'Opposition to intermarriage, which is based on the harm it may do to Judaism, places the individual in a position of subordinate importance to religion, a position which is clearly impossible.' *Liberalising Liberal Judaism*, p. 101. The above is a fair sample of the advocacy of mixed marriages that resounds in some Liberal pulpits.

together with Emil Hirsch, was invited and came to this country in 1910 to help in the propaganda for the local Liberal synagogue, arranged that his congregation in New York hold combined services for periods of some months with the Church of the Messiah and the Church of the Divine Paternity of that city. I shall not speak to-day of the 'rabbis' who have left Judaism, because, with one notable exception, they have not been men of eminence or leadership. I shall only bring one further instance in order to show whither Liberal 'rabbis' of eminence and leadership in the movement desire to pilot their communities. Some thirty years ago, the late Dr. Krauskopf, who was second only to Emil Hirsch in popularity and influence among American Liberals, expatiated to his flock on the 'inadequacy' and 'narrowness' of Judaism, and on the ethical need of modern men and women to abandon it. 'Judaism', he said, 'is merely the *ism* of little Judaea. We have outgrown it.' I shall not complete the quotation, as blasphemy can on no account be repeated in an Orthodox house of worship. In brief, he proposed to his congregation that they leave Judaism in a body! Only the determined action of some of the lay leaders, who demanded his resignation, caused him to retract; and he remained the 'rabbi' of his congregation to the end of his days.<sup>11</sup>

The London Liberals, likewise, have taken an unmistakable step in the same direction. At the instance of one of their female proselytes, they arranged last year a Jewish-Christian conference. With what religious result? A Cambridge professor—a non-Jew—

<sup>11</sup> He died in 1923, and was cremated. He preached his own funeral sermon, by speaking it beforehand into a phonograph.

who was present confessed that what struck him most was the way in which the Jews suppressed their Judaism. Things were far worse at the second conference, held only a few weeks ago. It is difficult to conceive of anything more humiliating than the spectacle presented by that meeting. Jews weakly apologized for Jewry, perverts sneered at Judaism, and the principal spokesman of Christianity charitably admonished Jews that they should increase their contribution of *disinterested* service to the State. He accused them of having two standards of honour—one in their dealings with Jews and another with non-Jews—and informed his Jewish hearers that ‘the objection to the Jew as a neighbour was not racial but sanitary’!<sup>12</sup> When we contrast these voluntary Jewish-Christian conferences with the disputations between Jews and Christians that were forced upon us in the Middle Ages, we shall see that the medieval disputations are monuments of Israel’s freedom in slavery. Our fathers emerged from them with increased self-respect and heightened spiritual power. Whereas these latter-day interdenominational discussions, this pitiful questioning of Gentiles by Jews, ‘Why don’t you love us?’ are convincing evidence of what Achad Ha’am calls עבדות בחוך חירות ‘slavery in freedom’,<sup>13</sup> spiritual slavery, on the part of the questioners that invited those insults and indignities. It is quite beside the point to

<sup>12</sup> See *Jewish Chronicle*, 6 November 1925. It is not by such methods that Sir Moses Montefiore and Baron Lionel de Rothschild, Drs. Nathan and Hermann Adler, Frederic Mocatta and the late Lord Rothschild, built up that position of respect which is the glory of Anglo-Jewry among the Jewries of the world.

<sup>13</sup> Achad Ha’am, *Selected Essays*, 1912, pp. 171–94.

state in extenuation that the Jewish organizers of this meeting 'meant well'. Of course, they meant well. But as the Wise Man said, *יש דרך ישר לפני איש ואחריתה* 'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'.<sup>14</sup> As I had occasion to declare in connexion with the same theme many years ago: 'Honesty alone will not save a man from the consequences of his defiance of the physical or of the spiritual laws of the universe; and honesty alone will not acquit leaders of men at the judgment bar of history for lamentably lacking the self-respect of free men.'

'Nevertheless,' we will be told, 'this large and growing synagogue stands to-day for a real movement in Judaism.' If one applies spiritual standards to religious or pseudo-religious matters, material success does not weigh. 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts': *לא בחיל ולא בכח כי אם ברוחי אמר*: this everlasting teaching of Chanukah should not be forgotten. Another slogan in these modernist circles is, 'Ours is the Judaism of the future'. This opinion, likewise, is not shared by any one who has the historical outlook, be he Jew or non-Jew. The great

<sup>14</sup> Proverbs xiv. 12. The Jesuit missionary to Jews, Father Arthur Day, S.J., who was officially invited to both conferences, clearly avows his aims in attending them. In a recent address to the Catholic Guild of Israel, he is reported by the *Catholic Times* to have said: 'He was now confirmed in the view that the Guild's main object was to get into touch with Jews, preparing remotely the way towards conversion. Individual conversions, and good ones, would come in due course when the atmosphere suitable for them was created. Undoubted progress had been effected in the removing of ignorance and prejudice.'

historian of antiquity, Dr. Eduard Meyer, in his latest book on Christian Origins, describes the Hellenistic apostasy in Maccabean times as *Reformjudentum*, the German name for Liberal Judaism. Again, a philosophical historian like Simon Dubnow, in the volume of his *World History of the Jewish People* which has just appeared, speaks of the London movement as an 'attempt to start a Jewish Christianity'.<sup>15</sup> In its attitude to the Torah, to the Sabbath, to מילה, to the Holy Land,<sup>16</sup> no less than in its feminism, its not over-scrupulous missionary methods,<sup>17</sup> and its 'summons to Christian

<sup>15</sup> *Weltgeschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, ii. 596. The words quoted are written in connexion with Mr. Montefiore's *Synoptic Gospels*. Dubnow refers to Achad Ha'am's trenchant criticism of Mr. Montefiore's book, in the *Jewish Review*, i. 203 (also reprinted in Achad Ha'am's *Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, translated by Leon Simon, pp. 223-53), in the course of which Achad Ha'am has the following to say on the New Paths in England and whither they lead :

'Our English Reformers have declared that the New Testament (or at least the Gospels) must be considered a part of Judaism. This pronouncement is certainly a step forward along a certain line of development, of which we are not yet at the end. . . . At this stage of the journey, our Reformers still think that it is possible to put the Gospels *beside* the Old Testament and the Talmud. But when they reach the next stage, they will recognize that the two cannot exist side by side, but only one above the other, and that when one stands the other falls. The early Christians went through the same process : they regarded their "message" at first simply as a part of Judaism ; but when they had travelled the full length of their development, they saw that the Gospels meant the overthrow of the very foundations of Judaism, and they left it altogether.'

<sup>16</sup> The early Christians refused to participate in the last War of Independence against the Romans. With very few exceptions, Liberal Jews are bitterly opposed to the National Home of the Jewish People and to Israel's resurrection on its ancient soil.

<sup>17</sup> At first Liberals proclaimed that their purpose was the reclaiming of the lost sheep of Israel ; they would not interfere with

fellowship'—the Liberal synagogue reproduces with alarming accuracy the attitude of mind which prevailed eighteen centuries ago in the Jewish-Christian Church. To all competent observers, Liberal Judaism is a moving staircase carrying those who have taken their stand on it out of Judaism. In the long run, there will be no other Judaism but Traditional Judaism. Cut flowers wither; the tree alone, with its roots deep in the soil, survives. Those who sever themselves from the Tree of Historical Judaism doom themselves to speedy disappearance and death.

Our duty is clear. The Maccabees have indicated it, and every year Chanukah repeats the lesson of their heroic lives and heroic deaths. I am too well aware that many are the Jewish men and women in this land and in other lands who have never heard that lesson; nay more, the number of those who are willing to learn it may grow less and less. Ignorance of Hebrew and indifference to Jewish Judaism may increase. Multitudes may fall away; and even leaders in Israel, lay and clerical, may help in the apostasy. But there is one other thing that I know: *this* will not be the end of the story. Isaiah has not proclaimed in vain his message of *ישועה*. A Righteous Remnant, undismayed by ostracism, ridicule, or persecution of any sort, *will* remain—indomitable, loyal, Jewish—to light again the lamp of Chanukah, idealism, and pure Judaism.

those who found satisfaction within the Orthodox camp. But that time is past. Public propaganda meetings, private canvassing for membership, especially among the women of the older Synagogues, and the adoption of Christian conversionist devices to lure Orthodox Jewish children to their fold, are now the rule. See p. 32.

Twenty-three years ago, Hermann Adler זכר צדיק לברכה clearly foresaw whither the seemingly innocent innovations demanded by the original Jewish Religious Union would lead. His fears that they would end in Sunday services, in the surrender of the sacred Abrahamic Covenant, and in a breaking away from religious communion with *Klal Yisroel*, have proved but too true. I shall conclude, therefore, in the solemn words of warning and entreaty spoken by this great and beloved Master in Israel nearly a quarter of a century ago:<sup>18</sup>

‘I earnestly appeal to you and to the community at large, ‘*Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein*’—not the way of lassitude and inaction, but the good way of consistency and sacrifice, the good way of earnestness and reverence, and path to allegiance, not alienation. ‘*And ye shall find rest for your souls.*’ You will win the consciousness that you have proved yourselves a strong link among the ages, that you will entrust to sturdier hands the light of Judaism you have borne thus far, so that when you have passed away, your children will take the place of their fathers, and will uphold our religious institutions with the same zeal, with perchance greater wisdom, and will cling to our faith and its ordinances with unswerving fidelity and unshaken loyalty.’ Amen.

<sup>18</sup> Dr. Hermann Adler, *The Old Paths*, pp. 13 and 14.

THE NEW PATHS:  
WHITHER DO THEY LEAD?

III

*Sermon preached on Sabbath Shirah, 5686, 30 January  
1926 at the St. John's Wood Synagogue, London.*

קרא בגרון אל תחשך כשופר הרים קולך והגד לעמי פשעם

*Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare  
unto My people their rebellion.—Isaiah lviii. 1.*

‘Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto My people their *rebellion*.’ ‘Rebellion’: that one word expresses the inmost nature of the movement in Jewry which I examined in two pulpit addresses some weeks ago. It is a revolt against the Jewish Law, the Jewish life, and the whole historic Jewish outlook.

This is a serious indictment; and no one appreciates its seriousness, and my responsibility in framing it, more than I do; but it is the only interpretation that the facts of Liberal Judaism and its history permit.<sup>1</sup> The prophets of that new doctrine tell us that they look forward to a ‘Judaism’ in many respects different from any Judaism which the world has hitherto known.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An adequate history of Liberal Judaism is still to be written. D. Philipson and E. Schreiber in English, and Immanuel Ritter in German, are frankly partisan, and generally suppress facts inconvenient to Liberals. S. Bernfeld in Hebrew is incomplete.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. C. G. Montefiore, *The Place of Judaism among the Religions of the World*, Essex Hall Lecture, 1918, p. 29.



And with the rejection of the Torah, the virtual abolition of the Abrahamic Covenant and the Sabbath, the repudiation of Zion and the Restoration, and the transvaluation of all Jewish values—their 'Judaism' is already different from any Judaism the world has ever known. Some of them add that when that New Judaism has been fully evolved, its expounders will not quarrel over the name—whether it should be Judaism or Christianity or some new neutral term—by which it is to be known.<sup>3</sup> It is pronouncements like these that enable us to estimate at its true value the protest issued against the two preceding sermons by the Council of the Jewish Religious Union for the Advancement of Liberal Judaism.<sup>4</sup>

That document furnishes an excellent illustration of

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Emil Hirsch; C. G. Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 552. ('To that religion let the future give what name it will.')

<sup>4</sup> I repeat that the leading exponents of Liberal Judaism have everywhere worked for the total abolition of *Meelah*. With very few exceptions, Liberal leaders to-day either virulently attack it, as did Abraham Geiger, Emil Hirsch, and J. Krauskopf; or they acquiesce in it, like the Jewish Religious Union and its founder, 'for reasons of expediency'.

The same opportunism is seen in their attitude to the Sabbath and the Festivals: their propaganda might otherwise suffer. This explains, though it does not excuse, many of the inaccuracies in the protest of the Council of the Jewish Religious Union.

To deal with all these inaccuracies would require a monograph. There is, however, the serious charge that I took part in a Jewish-Christian conference inasmuch as I was connected with the late League of Religions. This is more than an inaccuracy.

The League of Religions was *not* a Jewish Christian conference, and the meeting which I addressed on the pogroms in the Ukraine was attended by Buddhists, Mohammedans, and Hindus. Furthermore, I clearly expressed from the Chair my unalterable opposition

the Liberal attitude to the Torah, and the ethical consequences of such an attitude. Its authors accept, of course, the results of the barbarous vivisection of the Torah by the Higher Critics. They tell us, 'We do not believe in the literal truth of the story in Exodus, chapter xix, but yet we do believe in the binding or divine authority of the Ten Commandments'. In other words, the Giving of the Law at Mount Sinai and Israel's divine consecration as a priest-people are a myth, according to the spokesmen of the Jewish Religious Union. The next chapter they do approve of, and they accept the Ten Commandments as binding. Why? Because that chapter appeals to them. But suppose some one comes and declares that he does not approve of this or that among the Ten Commandments, what then? If, as these Liberals do, you deny the Revelation at Mount Sinai and thus repudiate the divine origin of the Ten Commandments, what answer have you to the man who questions the sacredness of human life, and says with Nietzsche, 'The weak must go to the wall, and we must help them go to the wall'? What answer have you to the hosts of immoralist authors, to the scheme at the first public meeting called to consider it. On 21 February 1919, I wrote to the Hon. Secretary of the movement, requesting that my name should in no way be used in connexion with the League of Religions. Later events fully justified my distrust of that abortive scheme.

Like my predecessor, I have, throughout my life, taken part in public meetings and discussions on national, social, and educational questions. This is something quite different from being associated with a Jewish-Christian conference such as that called by the Liberal synagogue, at which Judaism is ridiculed by perverts and the good name of the Jew defamed.

artists, and social revolutionaries who scoff at the holiness of pure family relations? What answer have you to the communist of Russia, France, or England, who denies the inviolability of property, and maintains that as *all* laws are man-made, *all* can be unmade by man? You have dethroned God; and you put your own reason in His place. You pick and you choose among His precepts, retaining only those which suit your inclination or expediency. Though you play with words and still speak of divine Revelation, there is no longer a 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not', no longer a Moral Law that stands eternal and immovable in a fluctuating world of relativity. Man becomes the measure of all things, human and divine. We are back again in the Iron Age of the Judges: *אין מלך בישראל איש הישר בעיניו יעשה* There is no King in Israel; every man doeth that which is right in his own eyes.

Liberal Judaism is dry rationalism—irreverent and disintegrating. Above all else, it is devoid of faith, of fructifying belief. And therefore spiritual sterility is its portion, as it has been of all other schismatic sects in our history. None of them—Samaritans, Sadducees, or even the greatest of them, the Karaites—have created anything of permanent worth in the realm of Israel's religious endeavour. 'The Karaites', says Rabbi Abraham ben David, five centuries ago, 'have never helped the cause of Israel. No great book for the advancement of the Law, or the spread of Wisdom, is theirs; not even a great song, strengthening or consoling.'<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Liberal Judaism, as it is not the outcome of Jewish knowledge, has not proved a fountain of Jewish knowledge. During the hundred years of its existence,

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Geiger, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, ii. 141.

Liberal Judaism has not even produced one notable hymn. And no wonder. When Israel has faith in God and in the Divine Law of Moses, Israel sings. 'ויאמינו בד' ובמשה עבדו או ישיר משה ובני ישראל But where there is faith neither in the God of Israel nor in the Torah of Moses, there can be neither song nor lasting scholarly achievement. What Wordsworth said of the French Revolution is but too true of the spiritual revolution denominated Liberal Judaism :

'Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!  
No single volume paramount, no code;  
No master spirit, no determined road;  
But equally a want of books and men!'

Strong resentment is felt by the authors of the protest over the statement that the New Paths not infrequently lead to Christianity. But surely it is fatuous for Liberals to fight history, their own history at that. 'Israel is a spiritual nation ; *it exists only through its Torah*',<sup>6</sup> is the memorable saying of Saadyah Gaon, a thousand years ago. Whenever or wherever any portion of Israel forsakes the Torah, that portion disappears from the ranks of Israel. All antinomian parties in Judaism, i. e. all schismatic movements that reject the binding authority of the Torah—sooner or later abandon Judaism and Israel altogether. It was so in the case of Paul, in the case of Sabbethai Zevi and the Frankists,<sup>7</sup> and it

<sup>6</sup> *Emunoth*, iii. 7. כי אומתינו איננה אומה כי אם בתורותיה.

<sup>7</sup> Sabbethai Zevi and most of his intimate followers turned Mohammedan. The latest of the Sabbethians, Jacob Frank, became Roman Catholic. Some of the pioneers of Liberal Judaism had strong leanings towards the Sabbethian heresy. Leopold Loew (*Gesammelte Schriften*, ii. 255) records that Aaron Chorin (the liberalizing Hungarian *Rav* who evolved rabbinical

will be so in the case of our latter-day Paulinians. In fact, the history of Liberal Judaism may be said to open with a move towards apostasy. David Friedländer, the morning star of Liberal Judaism, in 1799 petitioned the Lutheran authorities at Berlin to admit him and his fellow Liberals to their Church. He made, however, a reservation that they might be permitted to explain the Christian dogmas in their own manner. The Church authorities had no need for such infidel believers, and refused the petition.<sup>8</sup> The moral weakness of Jewish religious leaders that could descend to such coquetry with the dominant Church, filled even a wayward child of Israel—Heinrich Heine—with contempt for what these leaders loved to call the 'Jewish Reformation'.

'Israel lacks strength', Heine declared in 1823. 'Would that the delusion that weakness and one-sided negation are glorious, might soon disappear. This is justifications for the most radical religious reforms) came under Sabbethian influences in his youth at Prague; and he rightly traces to this circumstance the germ of Chorin's Liberal ideas. Jellinek writes to Loew in 1863: 'I have some remarkable testimony concerning Chorin's Sabbethaism. It is a question, however, whether it is expedient [i. e. for the cause of Liberal Judaism] to go deeply into this point at present' (Loew, *Gesammelte Schriften*, v. 193). Schreiber records that when Chorin died, in 1844, his death was announced 'in the Catholic Churches, and the bells tolled during his funeral'. R. Moses Sofer, on the other hand, spoke of Aaron Chorin as אהרן.

<sup>8</sup> Graetz, *History of the Jews*, English translation, v. 421; Schreiber, *Reformed Judaism and its Pioneers*, pp. 18-44. Friedländer, the would-be apostate, has been fairly canonized by Liberal Jewish historians. 'Whosoever is impudent enough to attack the venerable Friedländer . . . sins against the noblest aspirations of Judaism.' Geiger, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift*, ix. 248.

the motive of our religious reformation. Men who received their enlightenment and education from comedians wish to give Judaism new decorations and new scenes, and to pour the ocean of Judaism into a neat little hand-basin. *Others desire evangelical Christianity under Jewish names.*<sup>9</sup>

There were thus sections of Berlin Jewry in Heine's day who desired evangelical Christianity under Jewish names, even as certain sections of London Jewry a hundred years later desire evangelical Christianity (or Unitarian Christianity, or anything as long as it is Christianity) under Jewish names. With these people, infatuation with everything Christian is a veritable mania. A theist like the late Dr. Voysey was astounded at the adulation which Jewish Liberals heap upon the Founder of Christianity. To him that adulation appeared bordering on idolatry. The sentiment recently attributed to Dr. Stephen Wise of New York, that Jews must accept the ethical code of the Founder of Christianity, though this has been denied by him, has been uttered over and over again by scores of American Jewish Liberals<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Graetz, *ibid.* 547 ; German edition, xi. 363.

<sup>10</sup> 'Side by side with Moses and the Ten Commandments', the late Rev. J. Leonard Levy of Pittsburgh, declared, 'we are willing to place Jesus and the Nine Beatitudes.' Levy often chose his texts from the New Testament ; and was at one time offered the pastorate of a church in Scotland—which he considered a great compliment.

Mr. Montefiore complained in a recent sermon that 'the follies or vagaries or idiosyncrasies of two or three individuals are used to discredit Liberal Judaism'. It is well to recall that the Rev. J. Leonard Levy, and also Drs. Hirsch and Stephen Wise, visited this country in 1910 to help in launching the local Liberal synagogue. As for Dr. Hirsch, Mr. Montefiore calls him 'the most learned of all the Liberal rabbis of America and probably of the

during the last generation. Many Liberals, both in England and America, endorse the anti-Jewish gibe as to the alleged 'inadequacy' of the Hebrew Scriptures; and proclaim the need of supplementing them by the New Testament. 'Judaism', they declare, 'must come to terms with the Gospels.'<sup>11</sup> Needless to state that whensoever Jews have *come to terms with the Gospels*—from the days of the Jewish Christians in ancient Palestine to the Liberal 'New Israel' movement at Kishinef<sup>12</sup>—open apostasy to the Christian Church has been the result.<sup>13</sup>

In the meantime, as in early Christianity, the rejection of the Torah is but too often accompanied by a fierce intolerance towards the parent body. The much-vaunted universalism of Liberals is empty, and does not seem to world' (*Liberal Judaism and Hellenism*, p. 309). Mr. Montefiore has preached in Dr. Wise's Free Synagogue.

<sup>11</sup> C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, p. 906.

<sup>12</sup> The aim of 'New Israel', the historian Dubnow tells us (*History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, ii. 344), was to facilitate the contact between Jews and Christians. It rejected the dietary laws, circumcision, and adopted the Sunday-Sabbath. Its original founder, Jacob Prelooker, of Odessa, later came to England and abandoned Judaism altogether. It was reorganized at Kishinef in 1884 by Joseph Rabinowich (one of the pioneer colonists in Palestine), who enrolled the New Testament among the Jewish Scriptures for his Liberal 'Congregation of New Testament Israelites'. Eventually, he became a Christian missionary. Torah-less nationalism, no less than Torah-less universalism, ends in the arms of the Church.

<sup>13</sup> כל באיה לא ישוב—זו מינות (Aboth d'Rabbi Nathan 2, on Prov. ii. 19, 'None that go unto her return again'). Graetz, Bacher, and, among English scholars, R. Travers Herford hold that מינות refers to the Jewish-Christian heresy.

include the fellow Jew. Thus Abraham Geiger, the arch-enemy of the Traditional Jewish Law, for years strove to take his seat on the *Beth Din* at Breslau; and insisted that he participate in the giving of *Get* and *Chalitzah*.<sup>14</sup> None of the Liberal Jewish historians seem to realize what an outrage this action constituted on the religious rights and convictions of Orthodox Jews. If Liberals were a little less sectarian and more religious, they would see that there is no more elementary fact in modern civilization than a man's freedom of religious association.<sup>15</sup>

But there are infinitely graver manifestations of this intolerance. Despite their protestations of loyalty to the House and Brotherhood of Israel, it is humiliating to recall how often Liberals echo the taunts of anti-Semites in regard to the beliefs and observances of their brethren. And it does not always stop with taunts. Two or three instances must suffice. Thirty years ago, in Switzerland, it was the pronouncement of two German 'rabbis' against Shechitah that largely helped towards its prohibition in

<sup>14</sup> The best account of Abraham Geiger is found in Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, Third Series. S. Kaatz, *Abraham Geiger's religiöser Charakter*, gives further characteristic touches of the man.

<sup>15</sup> This they constantly deny to Orthodox Jews, even in England. During the last two years indignant letters appeared in the Anglo-American Jewish Press (Israel Abrahams in the *Menorah Journal*, and others in various publications), because the minister of the local Liberal synagogue was not invited to the conferences of Anglo-Jewish preachers which I convened in 1923 and 1925. The usual epithet flung at me is 'bigot', which is rather feeble. The late Dr. G. Deutsch, of Cincinnati, as far back as 1911, spoke of me as 'Torquemada'.



that country.<sup>16</sup> And recently in England, when a formidable agitation threatened to rush Parliament and public opinion into a condemnation of the oldest humane method of slaughter in the world, on the alleged ground that it was cruel ; at a time when the religious liberty of English Jews was in jeopardy—the minister of the local Liberal synagogue permitted himself to speak of the ‘ conflict ’ between the laws of Shechitah and the latest views of experts on the requirements of humane slaughtering. He ignored the considered opinion of the world’s leading authorities—Lister, Virchow, Dubois-Reymond, Haffkine, Leonard Hill, and literally hundreds of others, who uphold the humaneness of Shechitah—and was quite prepared to strengthen the hands of the maligners of his people. He has, however, since explained that when he spoke of the *conflict* between Shechitah and humanity, he meant to express his sympathy with Orthodox Jews in this matter !<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *The American Hebrew*, 29 May 1891, reports the decision of the Councils of the Cantons of Berne and Aargau that ‘ Shechitah is not a religious rite, and therefore cannot enjoy the protection of Art. 50. 1 of the Federal Law ’ ; and states that this decision was reached in consequence of the cited opinions of Rabbi Leopold Stein of Frankfort, and Rabbi J. Stern of Stuttgart, Wurtemberg. *The American Hebrew* comments on this as follows :

‘ Whether the prohibition which this resolution contemplates will be sanctioned by the Federal Government remains to be seen. But if the Jews of Switzerland are prevented by law from securing Kosher food, they have to thank in great measure these two Rabbis for the deprivation.’

Federal prohibition of Shechitah in Switzerland duly followed two years later.

<sup>17</sup> *Jewish Religious Union Bulletin*, May 1923, ‘ If all experts agreed in an adverse judgment of Shechitah ’, he states in his

Again, towards the end of 1923, there came from Geneva the suggestion of 'blank days' in the Calendar. As this measure would destroy the continuity of the week; result in a constantly backward-moving Day of Rest; and immeasurably increase the difficulties of Sabbath observance for the overwhelming majority of Jews—I wrote to the League of Nations and pointed out the Jewish objection to the proposed reform. That same Liberal leader, however, 'ridiculed' (to use his own word) the efforts of loyal Jews to defeat the calamitous proposal of the 'blank days', with its resultant nomadic Sabbath. In a similar spirit, when twenty years ago the explanation, 'the matter would present a tremendous difficulty.' The initial 'if' is noteworthy.

At the height of the anti-Shechitah agitation, Mr. C. G. Montefiore wrote to me objecting to the fact that, in my letter to *The Times* in reply to the Duchess of Hamilton, I had spoken of Shechitah as the 'Jewish method of slaughter' and had declared it to be 'an essential part of the Jewish religion'. He desired me in future to insert the word 'Orthodox' whenever I wrote of Jews and Judaism in connexion with Shechitah! In the course of my answer to this communication, I said:

'It would sound both pedantic and absurd to describe Shechitah as the "Orthodox" Jewish method of slaughter. Meat from animals killed in any other way *is* prohibited to Jews—no matter what lax Jews or Liberal Jews may do to the contrary; and the Jewish Ecclesiastical Authorities are in duty bound to see to it that the possibility at least of observing these laws is given to all Jews.

'As for the statement that Shechitah is an essential part of the Jewish religion, its correctness can no more be challenged on the ground that some Liberal Jews are indifferent or hostile to this sacred rite, than one can object to the statement that the belief in the Unity of God is an essential part of the Jewish religion, on the alleged ground that there have been Jewish polytheists in the past and there are Jewish pluralists and atheists at the present day.'

Massachusetts Legislature showed its willingness to grant to people who observed Saturday as their day of rest the right to keep open their places of business on Sunday, a prominent Liberal rabbi was responsible for the defeat of the Bill.<sup>18</sup> 'Orthodox Jews', he maintained, 'have brought so many sacrifices for their religion, that it will do them no harm if they bring this additional sacrifice, and continue to close their shops on two days of the week'. There are some who may be inclined to dismiss all these adduced instances as merely the malicious action of individuals. But Liberal Jewish bodies have shown just as little consideration for the religious scruples of fellow Jews. In the splendid Jewish hospitals which Liberal Jews have erected in the larger American cities, no provision is made for the ritual food requirements of faithful Jews, who form the overwhelming majority of the patients. Men of all shades of opinion have over and over again pleaded with the directors and managers of these bodies to permit what non-Jews in charge of general hospitals, especially in England, have permitted for generations. In vain.<sup>19</sup>

'We need a new morality', is a much-applauded sentiment that was proclaimed at the consecration of the local Liberal synagogue. It is evident that a little of the old morality might still be found useful; that part of it, at least, which looks askance upon ridiculing the

<sup>18</sup> 'Rabbi' Charles Fleischer, of Boston; see Meldola de Sola, *Jewish Ministers?* p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> American municipal authorities, even Tammany Hall administrations, have shown more tolerance. Several municipal institutions in the larger cities have 'Kosher kitchens' for their Jewish inmates.

religious beliefs of other people and forbids violating the conscience, even of fellow Jews.

*'Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto My people their rebellion.'* It is in obedience to an irresistible call, that I have spoken of the New Paths. In the light of forty years' study and personal observation of the movement in both the New and the Old World, I presented Liberal Judaism to the community not in vague generalizations, but by an array of historical facts which show all too clearly whither it invariably, nay inevitably, leads. But my task is only half done: Traditional Judaism is more than the negation of a negation. It is that vivid, vitalizing realization of God which found eternal expression at the Red Sea: עני וזמרת יה ויהי לי לישועה זה אלי ואנוהו אלהי אבי עני וארממנהו 'The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation; This is my God and I will glorify Him; my father's God, and I will exalt Him'.<sup>20</sup> Alas, that to many this living religion of Orthodox Judaism is but a matter of hearsay. I therefore hope to supplement the series of addresses which I conclude to-day with another series on the foundations and affirmations of Traditional Judaism, on the problems and duties that the present hour brings to the loyal sons and daughters of Israel. May it be the will of our Father who is in Heaven that it be given me to help them make their Judaism a matter of living experience, so that they exclaim with Job of old: לשמע און שמעתיק: 'I had heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee'.<sup>21</sup> Amen.

<sup>20</sup> Exodus xv. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Job xlii. 5.



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